DWB

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The Journal of British Fantasy Television No. 72 DECEMBER 1989

"...AND IT'S GOODBYE FROM HIM!"

B B C PLEDGES TO "TAKE DOCTOR WHO THROUGH THE 90'S" (Page 3)

INSIDE: DOCTOR WHO...LAND OF THE GIANTS
STAR TREK: NEXT GENERATION...RAY HARRYHAUSEN

The Journal of British Fantasy Television

P.O. BOX 1015, BRIGHTON BN2 2YU

WITH 'DOCTOR WHO' the focus of so much press speculation recently D W B decided to investigate, and this issue we interview Johnny Byrne and Victor Pemberton who both allay fears that have been mounting due to unjustifiably irresponsible press reporting of the impending Coast To Coast movie and 'Doctor Who's' supposed axeing after Season 26! Indeed, being such big news lately, 'Doctor Who' dominates this issue.

Next month sees the release of our Christmas Special (though for overseas readers read New Year Special), and has it got a cracker of a cover!! Together with a host of absorbing interviews, features, etc., it is guaranteed to keep you entertained throughout the Yuletide period. Expect it around mid-December.

Finally, as you can see below D W B plans to publish throughout 1990 (though we are anticipating a six-week gap somewhere along the line for a well-deserved break!). D W B will be known as 'The Journal of Fantasy Television' to enable us to justify our coverage of overseas output, and with 'Doctor Who' off our screens next year expect slightly wider coverage of other programmes. The price of D W B goes up marginally again in the New Year, but you can save money and also be among the first to recent your issue every month by subscribing. Be with us in 1990! GARY

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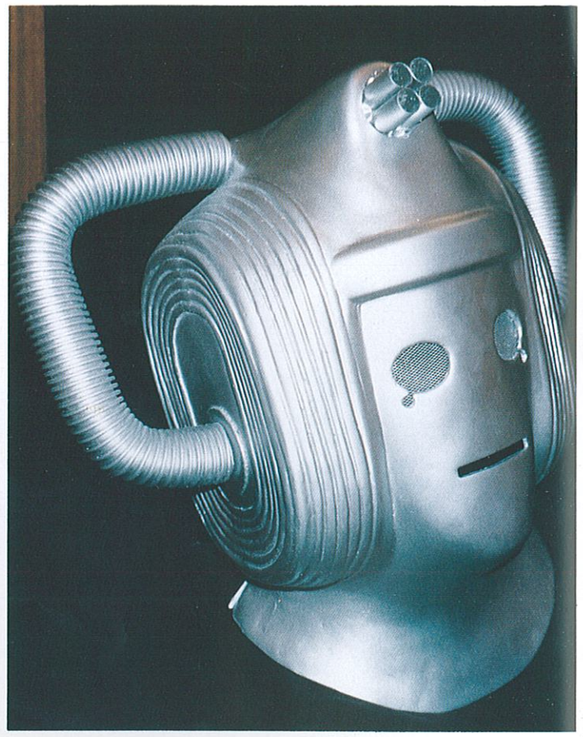
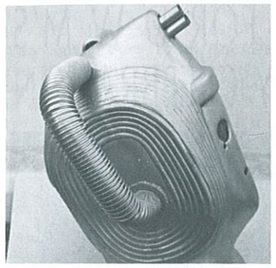
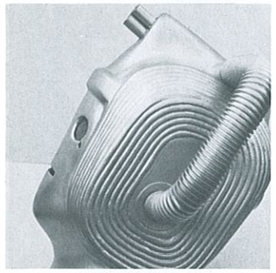
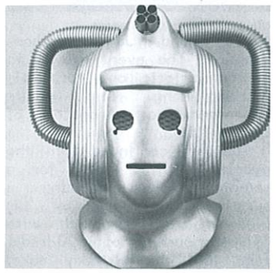
BID FOR A CYBERMAN HELMET FOR CHRISTMAS!









D W B has come across a genuine Cyberman helmet originating from the 60's and modified for the 70's adventure, 'The Revenge of the Cybermen'.

The mask, which is in pristine condition, has been maintained by a collector over the years, and is now looking for a new home following its owner's decision to sell up and live abroad.

MODIFIED

The mask was originally constructed by the Lovells, who built most of the 60's monsters (see D W B#65), from a sketch by incoming costume designer Bobi Bartlett who was determined to leave her mark on the famous metallic monsters for the 1968 epic **The Invasion.**

When the Cybermen returned seven years later, four of the six masks were still intact, and although completely new costumes were designed, director Michael Briant elected to save money and use the same masks, albeit modified. Therefore the neck-shoulder braces were rounded off rather than squared, corrugated piping over the 'jug handles' was added, and a four-barrelled gun attached to the head (ref:Invision - **Revenge of the Cybermen**).

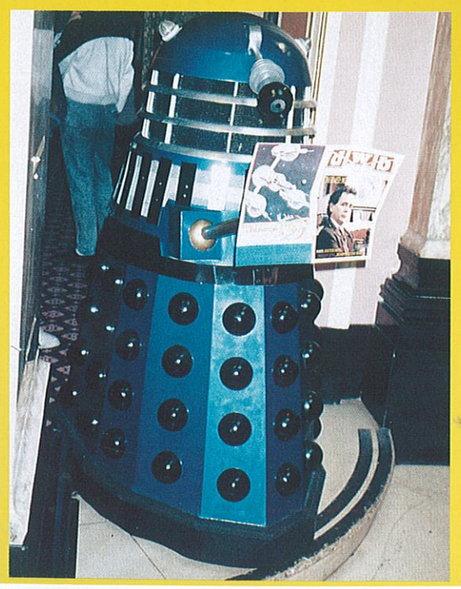
YOUR CHANCE TO BID!

The helmet is now up for sale, but being such a valuable relic from the past it is vital that the successful purchaser should be someone who is genuinely keen to maintain it.

If you are seriously interested in purchasing the mask, write via the **DWB** address stating your offer (do not send any money at this point) and an SAE.

A donation from the proceeds raised by the sale of the mask will go to charity.

1990 SUBSCRIPTIONS



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ALL THE BEST DALEKS SUBSCRIBE TO D W B...

NEW BBC HEAD CHAMPIONS DOCTOR WHO'S CAUSE

THE RECENTLY-APPOINTED **new Head of Serials at the BBC, Peter Cregeen, is quickly emerging as the biggest supporter of 'Doctor Who' since David Reid left the post in 1984.**

Although he has been in the job for only a short time, his action has already prompted the BBC to issue a statement putting paid to unfounded press speculation that **Doctor Who** is to be axed due to atrocious ratings.

The statement begins by saying:

"DOCTOR WHO is one of the B B C's most important programmes. There is no reason why it should not run for another 26 years."

Cregeen continues the statement by saying he is looking for:

"...the best possible way to take 'Doctor Who' through the 90's"

and confirming that this:

"...may involve having it made outside."

ENCOURAGING

This is the first time in years that someone with such authority at the BBC has spoken so encouragingly and sincerely about the series in public. More importantly is that is should come from the person now in charge of **Doctor Who,** and his use of the phrase "through the 90's" as opposed to "into the 90's" is especially reassuring.

Peter Cregeen was recently brought back to the BBC from ITV to manage the Corporation's new Serials Department after the recent disbandment of the Series and Serials department headed by Mark Shivas. Shivas is now responsible for one-off dramas.

Cregeen has an impressive track record behind him, having produced successful series like The Onedin Line and Wings at the BBC during the 70's, a time when **Doctor Who's** popularity was at an all-time high, and he is obviously keen to see the series restore its traditional values.

As a sign of his quality-conscious eye, one of his first acts in his new post was to poach his former ITV colleague, ex-acclaimed **Doctor Who** director Michael Ferguson, away from producing the popular The Bill to take over as producer of the B B C's ailing EastEnders.

Now responsible for **Doctor Who's** future, it is anticipated he will act equally shrewdly in pairing the series up with a similarly high-calibre producer/independent production company.

ANNOUNCEMENT ANTICIPATED

An announcement regarding the production of **Doctor Who** into the 90's is expected at any time from the end of November through December.

John Nathan-Turner officially ends his ten year stint as producer when the current season ends, although he will act as caretaker for the series up until Christmas.

VERITY'S COMPANY WITHDRAWS BID

Cinema Verité - Verity Lambert's production company, have pulled out of the bidding to produce **Doctor Who,** apparently because the B B C are laying down too many conditions that must come as part and parcel of the package for whichever company takes over.

Another front-runner for the covetted rôle of independent producers of **Doctor Who** have emerged as Zenith Productions, producers of the B B C's currently-running Paradise Club. However they are believed to have pulled out under similar circumstances, their difference being that they don't want to inherit Sylvester McCoy's Doctor!

Although Coast to Coast and Victor Pemberton's company, Saffron Productions, are still in the running, what doesn't appear to have been touched upon so far is the possibility that the BBC may be considering hiring an independent producer to continue making the series in-house **at the BBC!** With the B B C's OB unit recently having been disbanded, this possibility gives credence to rumours currently circulating that Season 27 will be produced entirely on film. With the speculation of an increased episode count to boot, the future for **Doctor Who** sounds very rosy indeed, despite next year's enforced suspension... GL

RATINGS for 'Battlefield' and 'Ghost Light' have continued to teeter around the 3-4 million mark.

Outgoing producer John Nathan-Turner has been blamed in part for the disappointing figures because of his policy of waiting until **The Curse of Fenric** to publicise the new season.

SHAMBLES

According to him **Doctor Who** would have been swamped by publicity given to other series beginning their runs at the start of September rendering a press call for **Battlefield** useless. However, despite the presence of several cast members from **The Curse of Fenric,** the press call towards the end of October was a shambles, with the downmarket tabloids devoting their space, ironically, to unfounded rumours of the show's "impending cancellation" due to its massacre in the ratings from Coronation Street.

Coronation Street itself isn't helping matters either, with the series once again back in fashion due to superb handling of its publicity.

It should be noted that Monday's episode has tended to be slightly more popular than Wednesday's since **Doctor Who** returned, with the first Friday screening proving even more popular. Also worth noting is that Watchdog - Coronation Street's Monday opposition - benefits from a repeat screening on BBC2 the following day which could account for its consistently higher ratings of around 5-6 million.

Here are the figures for the first six episodes of Season 26, with the figures in brackets indicating the overall position in the television chart for that week: (figures courtesy of Aspect Hill Holiday):

Battlefield(1)	3.1m(102)
Battlefield(2)	3.9m(91)
Battlefield(3)	3.6m(95)
Battlefield(4)	4.0m(89)
Ghost Light(1)	4.16m(94)
Ghost Light(2)	4.0m(93)

COAST TO COAST DENY SUTHERLAND RUMOURS

COAST TO COAST have asked us to publish the following statement:

"Recent press reports claiming that Donald Sutherland has been cast as the film Doctor are totally fictitious.

"Coast To Coast would like to clarify that no-one can be cast until a deal has been finalised with a studio to actually make the film.

"Although no-one has formally been approached to play the lead, several actors are being considered and Donald Sutherland does appeal.

"Also untrue are the suggestions that the film will show the Doctor in any sort of physical relationship with his companion. We wish to assure you he does no such thing."

This announcement was prompted by an erroneous news article published in the November issue of Starburst, and which was subsequently picked up by the more irresponsible areas of the press and Radio 1, a typical example being that printed here from Scotland's mass-selling Daily Record.

DOCTOR WHO: THE TIMELORD

Far from being a publicity exercise, we can confirm that the film is definitely now on, and has the working title of **Doctor Who: The Timelord.**

Producers Coast To Coast paid an undisclosed sum of money to the BBC on June 29th to secure the buy-out rights for a Doctor Who movie, with the option on a second and third film at agreed fees.

As publicity spokesperson Felice Arden pointed out recently: "No one who is not going to make a movie puts out that kind of money."

Author Johnny Byrne, in this issue's exclusive interview, reveals there have been many revisions to the script, but as Arden observes: "I'm glad we made the changes that we made. Quite frankly I think all of us feel that if we had the best deal on the table a year and a half ago, we would have been making the wrong film. We're now relying less on the grandiose sets and creatures, now you have 90 instead of 150!"

SUTHERLAND

McCOY

Now it's the sexy boozy Dr Who

TV's favourite Time Lord Dr Who is to be turned into a James Bond-style hero in a new multi-million pound feature film.

Canadian actor Donald Sutherland has been given the task of turning the all-British time traveller into a modern Amercian-style macho man.

US Movie makers Pathe films will make the children's favourite:

- **CARRY** a high-tec gun to zap baddies.
- **BRAWL** in bar rooms with weird aliens.
- **AND BONK** his beautiful assistant – Britain's former 3-2-1 star Caroline Munroe.

Sutherland landed the role of Tardis Man in the £20 million block buster despite stiff competition from British actors.

BATTLES

The role had been linked with John Cleese, Dudley Moore, Bob Hoskins and the current TV Doc, Sylvester McCoy.

An insider said yesterday: "The Doctor will be more of a James Bond type character, sent on missions to save the universe.

"The movie will be very like Star Wars, promising a whole host of spectacular space battles along the way.

"It's a far cry from the TV series which is now considered tame."

Many of the country's Dr Who fans are expected to be outraged.

But veteran Dr Who writer Johnny Bryne – who has written the new movie – said: "It will definitely take the doctor into the nineties."

The film-makers hope the picture will revive interest in the time-traveller whose BBC TV series may be axed after a disastrous ratings battle.

"It still will look good on screen, but the reductions gave us room to really enhance the character development."

(Felice Arden quotes courtesy of The Friends Of Doctor Who).

BSB STRIKE "EARLY 'WHO" DEAL

BBC ENTERPRISES have struck another lucrative deal involving the sale of 'Doctor Who'.

BSB, the new satellite service launched early next year, has obtained a package of BBC programmes worth £3½ million, which includes "early **Doctor Who's**". Exactly which vintage of **Doctor Who** "early" refers to is not yet known.

This deal follows fast on the recent sale of all 42 McCoy episodes to German TV station RTL.

FANS TURN OUT FOR D W M'S 10th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

ONE THOUSAND, FIVE HUNDRED fans took London's Centrepoint by storm on October 21st for Marvel's 10th anniversary sign-in.

The tiny Café Munchen proved to be hopelessly inadequate for the venue as the DWM readers converged on the tiny bar to receive autographs from DWM contributors old and new, including Alister Pearson and Lee Sullivan, and guests Sylvester McCoy and John Nathan-Turner. The event proved to be an historic one for JNT, marking his last public appearance as producer of **Doctor Who.**

The fun continued into the evening with a party for a selected few, including a surprise appearance by Lis Sladen, and climaxed with Sylvester pushing Sophie Aldred's face into the birthday cake, unaware it was full of skewers!

BRIEFLY...

ATTENDEES at the Shangri-La convention at Reading on October 21st were amazed to discover, on arrival at the Post House Hotel, that the venue had been reallocated to - a marquee! Although the hotel was booked 18 months in advance, the organisers were only told a month before the event that their space had been double-booked. The other party made their booking **after** the Shangri-La committee, but the latter apparently made no fuss about the affair. As one attendee commented: "They had the grounds to sue the hotel but were prepared to give their guests and attendees second best!"

Marion Breeze, who also attended the event, told DWB: "It was a very nice marquee, I must admit, with pastel blue and white stripes, but a tent is not the nicest thing to be in when there is very nearly a gale blowing and the temperature is much too low for a paltry couple of heaters to be able to do anything about."

Needless to say the guests, Colin Baker and Terry Molloy, were reportedly not amused!

ALISTER PEARSON has won the job of BBC Video's **Doctor Who** jacket illustrator following their decision to adorn the covers with artwork only. He has been commissioned for three 1990 releases, but their titles and release dates have yet to be confirmed. Alister (pictured above) is also jubilant his auction painting for Nebula 26 raised £325 for charity!

TARGET paperbacks are soon to go up to £2.50 in price, commencing with the Programme Guide published in December.

LONGLEAT's **Doctor Who** exhibition is being expanded into the surrounding car park area for next year's summer run.

SYLVESTER McCOY has received a blasting from Starburst's resident TV reviewer Paul Mount. In his TV Zone column for November's issue, he commented: "...The series' biggest drawback still remains its star...in this new 'serious' mode we're faced with the fact that Sylvester simply **isn't** dramatic. He fails to dominate the proceedings in the way which 'classic' Doctors were able to do and his efforts at anger are frankly laughable. **Doctor Who** fans seem quite content with his somewhat half-hearted portrayal, if only for the sake of stability in the much-troubled show, but I won't shed too many tears when he decides to move on to pastures new."

IF WE MAY START with your 'Doctor Who' novel Fury From The Deep, how do you feel about it being voted, unanimously, the most popular 'Doctor Who' novelisation to date (ref:D W B#69) ?

I'm absolutely thrilled and I think it's very generous of everyone who's read it. I'm needless to say amazed!

Now of course you're working on your 70's radio play The Pescatons ?

Yes, it's taken a long time to get the rights cleared, but I'm now in the middle of writing it and hopefully it will be out in September or October of next year.

Now that Terry Nation's given the green light for the Troughton Dalek stories to be novelised, would you be interested in tackling The Evil Of The Daleks which you were involved with at the time ?

A categorical YES! I'd love to. I thought **The Evil of the Daleks** was wonderful and one of the best.

Now we've got the obligatory book plugging out of the way, could you confirm whether the rumours surrounding the possible return of 'Timeslip' are true ?

I have my own production company - Saffron Productions - and we own the rights for **Timeslip** which we're hoping to do a sequel for. At the moment we're trying to raise the cash to do it because it's going to need a lot of money - science fiction doesn't come cheaply these days! I would like to do it all on film and I'm aiming to get maybe a pilot of it made followed by six episodes of a serial which I would probably write myself if I could get it off the ground. I would then hope to invite Bruce Stewart back to carry on with it but I haven't spoken to him yet about it. Bruce Stewart wrote the bulk of the original **Timeslip** and wrote them very well too, but it was a hard task to write so many which is why I came in at the end.

Would you resurrect the old characters ?

Oh yes! Spencer Banks and Cheryl Burfield - who played Simon and Liz - would return and they'd be playing themselves as grown-ups with families of their own, and they'd be drawn back through some devious means to the time barrier.

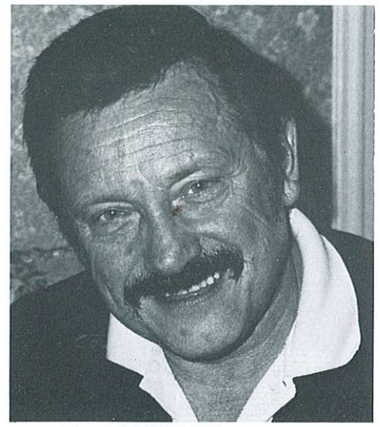
There's also been the rumour of your company putting in a bid to independently take over the production of 'Doctor Who' ?

I'd like to comment on that but I can't at the moment because this is a very delicate time for the show and I really can't put my toe out of step. But the BBC are considering independent production for it as we all know - it doesn't seem to be a secret. The only thing I can say is yes, I am interested in doing it, but it would be most unprofessional of me to say any more. We'll just have to wait and see because the BBC aren't making any announcements until the end of the year. But obviously I would like to do something with it.

Would that be to take it back to Sydney Newman's original premise ?

If I'm going to do it obviously I would do it in the way I am used to. Every age has its own interpretations of the Doctor, and I have been critical of the show over the last few years, but that's a personal thing. I also concede that everybody has their own way of wanting to do it. All I can say at this stage is that I certainly wouldn't proceed in the way it is done today.

You have been critical of the series in recent years, but how do you think 'SAFFRON PRODUCTIONS' ARE AMONG VARIOUS COMPANIES BEING CONSIDERED BY THE B B C TO TAKE OVER 'DOCTOR WHO'. THE COMPANY IS RUN BY VICTOR (MIDAS TOUCH) PEMBERTON AND GARY LEIGH SPOKE TO HIM ON OCTOBER 14th...



Sylvester McCoy has settled into the rôle ?

I have to be fair and say I have not seen his stories. All I know is that Sylvester is a fine actor and has all the potential of being a very fine Doctor.

What productions have Saffron been responsible for so far ?

We did our first one, an Omnibus arts documentary for the BBC, a year ago, on Gwen Franklin-Davis, a very fine old actress, with Sir John Gielgud, Dirk Bogarde, Alan Bates and Peggy Ashcroft, and that at the moment is being nominated for an international Emmy in New York. At the moment we're negotiating an Omnibus of the comedian Frankie Howard which we'll hopefully start doing this spring.

What direction, if 'Doctor Who' is to survive, do you think it should take ?

I have always said this: I think there is no substitute for a good story, which I know is a cliché, and it would have to take the form of a drama - a comedy would come second.

What capacity do you hold in your company ?

I'm the managing director and am in overall charge of it, and I'm also the senior producer in it. David Spencer, who incidentally played Thomni in **The Abominable Snowmen**, is a director of the company and is also directing programmes for us.

Going back to the Troughton days, why was your association with the programme then so very brief ?

I was always basically a writer and I never actually wanted to be on the staff of any company for too long. I've always been a freelancer right from my earlier writing days in radio. And in any case, in those days they didn't encourage you to write a show and be an editor on it at the same time. So I had a choice. I was only there for about six months or something like that, but I did work on various stories. I script edited **Tomb of the Cybermen** and I was also around for **The Evil of the Daleks** and **The Ice Warriors** and I remember being in the studio when they all took place. I suppose it was a classic period although people often ask me whether I thought I realised I was involved in a classical period at the time, and of course one has to say no because none of knew that it would reach the kind of cult status that it holds today.

Do you think this status may have evolved because there is so little from that period that still exists which has resulted in a mythos being built up around it ?

There's a touch of that, of course, but I also have to say I also think it's because the basic idea is such a good one. It goes back almost, in a sense, to all the great SF writers such as Conan Doyle and H.G.Wells, for instance.

Watching 'Doctor Who' recently can be a challenge in comparison because you really have to tax your mind to follow most of the plots and to try to understand what the writer is trying to get across, whereas the earlier stories were just straightforward storytelling albeit brilliantly executed.

I think what they're doing today is asking the viewers to do all the hard work, and that's why they're sadly turning off.

The current series has opened with some of the lowest ratings ever.

That brings me nothing but grief I have to tell you. I find it really sad and I would have to ask why.

An asset the programme does currently have is the successful Doctor/companion relationship. How would you feel about inheriting them ?

I don't know, it's hypothetical to say if I were to inherit them. But as I said, Sylvester is a very fine actor. He's got personality and charisma. I'm very much against too much comedy - Patrick Troughton, from my period, had comedy, but it wasn't foremost, it enhanced the sinister aspects of the scripts. But all good writing is a combination of these things. The most important thing about **Doctor Who** is that it should be taken seriously. The fact that it happens to be SF is neither here nor there - it's important that the story can stand up on its own, and Sylvester is perfectly capable of doing that, and so is Sophie Aldred who I think is a lovely actress. I think an artist is only as good as his or her material.

I suppose there are one or two readers who wouldn't forgive me if I didn't ask you about the future of 'Fraggle Rock'?

It's over now because we came to the end of the shows and they made no more in the States. So we came to a natural ending of it and the last lot of those will be going out later this year I think.

I'm now involved with a new project with the Henson organisation, which is supposed to be filmed in the States and that's where I should be at the moment except that it's been delayed for a few months because Walt Disney's have just taken over Jim Henson's Muppet empire. It was due to start filming this year with Cliff Richard guesting and he's very disappointed he wasn't able to do it. It's "on hold", as the Americans say, but we'll have lots of guest stars for it in America next year. I'm also going to be doing something else with my own company for Channel 4 next year, and I'm also in the middle of a massive semi-autobiography about my mother which is published next year. She was played by Nerys Hughes is a trilogy of radio plays this year called Our Family, and the response was so enormous I've been asked to write a book based on it. It's about an ordinary family with no famous people in it! **Victor, thank you.**

WHY SO LONG TO MAKE 'WHO INDEPENDENT?

Maxwell Rowan, Falkirk (23-10-89)
The news of **Doctor Who**'s forthcoming hiatus is frustrating and slightly worrying after episode one of **Battlefield** being shot down in flames in the ratings. Will the BBC still think the programme is worth transfering to independent production and increasing episode count ? Whatever the outcome, it seems strange that it will take so long for Season 27 to make it to the screen. The BBC must have been planning **Doctor Who**'s tendering for some time, and one would have assumed that by the time the current season's production had finished, the negotiations could have been finalised to make the transfer almost immediate. It would then take the independent company responsible nearly eight months to get together the resources and finance in time for a Spring '90 start of production, with Season 27 then following in the autumn.

With the current situation we probably won't see any new **Doctor Who** until Autumn 1991, making the gap between seasons twenty months - longer than the 1985/6 hiatus! This is far too long a time for the programme to be off screen. And with the British viewing public being so notoriously fickle, their memories could be short and we might end up with another disastrous set of ratings. When **Doctor Who** does return in 1991, it must **not** be opposite Coronation Street, which is going from strength to strength and is now on three times a week. It must have some decent publicity and possibly begin further into the autumn schedules. If it were twenty episodes it could run from October to the end of February! No matter how good the production standards may be, it will need to be sold **again** to the British public.

Gary Phillips, South Yorkshire (11-10-89)
"No decision is expected on **Doctor Who**'s future until November", proclaimed a recent issue of TV Guide. At the time of writing, six episodes of Season 26 have been broadcast, including tonight's - four of them painfully slow and plotless, **Battlefield** 4 and **Ghost Light** 1 being the exceptions, the remainder could have been better-produced by a four-year-old. I cannot help but wonder if the decision to axe the programme was taken some seven months ago, as I recall the headline from DWB#64 - **"Doctor Who** - New Cancellation Threat". I mean why, after years of "I have been persuaded to stay", has JNT been allowed to quit so easily and the production office closed down ? Sylvester's recent comment that "Big changes are afoot" is as transparent as Colin Baker's 1986 reply to the question asked of him on Saturday Superstore: "If you had a real working TARDIS, where would you go ?" Answer: "Back to 1984 and do it all again". In other words, "I've been sacked", can therefore be easily translated as "There ain't going to be a Season 27, but I've been told to talk as if there will be"!

*"This guy's got no idea how to write **good** sci-fi. Where's the bad pacing, self-mocking parody, silliness and bad acting ? Another one for the out-tray."*

Powell and Shivas must be sharpening their axe in glee as the ratings for the unpublicised Season 26 come through.

THE FIGURES OF DOOM ?

Simon O'Connor, Jersey (8-10-89)
I hope the BBC change their attitude towards **Doctor Who** soon. At the end of last year they seemed to be giving it more recognition, but now they seem more than ever to want to get rid of it. How can they expect **Doctor Who** to obtain good viewing figures in an early evening slot in September up against the most popular series on British television - if they don't even **publicise** it ?!

A.D.Musgrave, Leicester (9-10-89)
I very much admire your confidence that **Doctor Who** will continue after its current series, but my hopes aren't high, especially after reading in **DWB** about the disastrous ratings for **Battlefield**. I could understand if the series was trash, but it isn't. One obvious reason I can cite for the ratings being so low is the lack of advertising. I only saw two previews for **Battlefield**, and even the Radio Times seemed to be hiding the fact that it was back. It was the only new programme that week which didn't warrant a mention in the front of the magazine!

I only hope that the ratings pick up, and soon, because it would be terrible to have the plug pulled on the programme when quality is at a high.

It's obvious that the Coronation Street omnibus hasn't helped **Doctor Who** in the slightest.

TUNELESS JUNK AND DIZZY TITLES

David Waddell, Glasgow (17-10-89)
Much has been stated recently concerning incidental music in **Doctor Who** (re: Series Survey results and Alister Bludula's letter in DWB#71). To be frank, I totally agree with Alister's comments, especially after viewing **Battlefield** and the first episode of **Ghost Light**. Hardly one minute passed without continual synthesised, tuneless junk pounding through our skulls. Whatever happened to the melodic, orchestral-type music from the likes of Peter Howell and Dudley Simpson ? (Word of advice: listen to the classic **Leisure Hive** composition).

POWELL'S ENTHUSIASM "LAUGHABLE"

Dave Smith, Rome, Italy (23-10-89)
I note That the editorial of **DWB#71** boasted of increased readership in Australia, Canada and America, but Italy was completely ignored. Come on - a bit of recognition please, it's not easy carrying on a one-man campaign to bring **Doctor Who** to a new country!

Seriously, **DWB#71** must be the best of the new issues, crammed full of important news, features, and excellent articles not afraid to point the finger at those responsible for the programme's demise, nor to suggest ways forward to save it. Unfortunately, my pleasure at reading the issue was considerably tempered by confirmation of the disgraceful news that the Doctor is once again on hiatus. That means, by the time Season 27 opens, the BBC will have shown the grand total of 56 episodes in six years (or the output we expected from just two seasons during most of the programme's history!).

The shortness of the seasons and total absence of the Doctor from our screens for huge periods has already affected viewing figures and could ultimately lead to permanent cancellation. This is precisely what Paul Cornell (in **DWB#70**) should consider rather than engaging in ridiculous ego games and applauding his own pithy comments.

I have to disagree with **DWB** in referring to this new hiatus as "unavoidable". It was completely **avoidable**. JNT made it quite clear that he wanted to leave way back during the production of Season 25 (and probably earlier if we but knew), which has given the BBC plenty of time to appoint a successor, be it an outside company or an internal producer, without a transition period. Nor can I (unfortunately) concur with the view that this could lead to 20 episode seasons: the BBC, from past experience, is more likely to use the opportunity to cut the budget even further and spend it instead on some inane game show or yet another middle-class comedy. I never thought I'd be sorry to see JNT go...

The best article ever published in **DWB** was The Enemy Within (#71) by Tim Munro. Though anything but a fan of JNT or Cartmel, I have become increasingly aware that they have only been allowed to churn out the drivel of recent years due to the contempt the BBC holds for the series. Powell's supposed enthusiasm for McCoy's Doctor is laughable: as if Sylvester can possibly revitalise the series himself with the Powell-approved plots he was given for Seasons 24/25.

However, from what I have read in **DWB**, at least the new stories seem to be heading in the right direction, and let's hope the incoming production company continues this trend.

Furthermore, am I the only person to detest the opening graphics and musical dirge ? Why not re- t back to the music and titles of the Tom Baker era - how many of us used to sit glued to **that** never-ending tunnel of utter mystery ? That wink Sylvester gives us at the beginning of each episode negates any effort to instil mystery into his Doctor in the subsequent 22½ minutes! Perhaps in the next poll a survey of the favourite opening titles/music could be conducted ?

Kenneth Horlock, Kent (20-10-89)
A criticism I have of Season 26 so far concerns the titles and theme music. There's all the talk about this being a darker and more mysterious series (there's even a new jacket for the Doctor to accentuate the change), and yet it's those same, dizzy showbiz titles. I know it would've been expensive to change them, but the titles and theme should match the product, and while they may have suited the glitzy and gaudy Season 24, they're totally out of place on Season 26.

Incidentally, there was a mistake in your **Batman** feature in **DWB#69**. **Batman**'s first comic-strip adventure was not called The Case Of The Criminal Syndicate but The Case Of The **Chemical** Syndicate. The Radio Times made the same mistake in their **Batman** feature a few months back. Talking about the Radio Times, I notice they printed a letter criticising their lack of **Doctor Who** coverage recently - ironically the very same week TV Guide had a two-page colour feature on the show **plus** a photo (from **Survival**) on the cover! If they can do it, why can't Radio Times ?

CARTMEL V. SAWARD

Robert John Williamson, Leeds (12-9-89)
Reading your magazine, I don't think Andrew Cartmel will be missed. Surely the blame for **Fenric** overrunning lies firmly in his court. Didn't the scripts seem in need of tailoring when he received them ? Ian Briggs, interviewed in the new Fantasy Zone, stresses the importance of the structure of the story. I suppose that will be destroyed once it is chopped to fit the schedules. But before we award Cartmel the 'most incompetent script editor of all time' title, compare him to Saward. At least in Cartmel's stories the Doctor gets involved quickly, the companion has something to do apart from being lusted after by slimey baddies, and we don't have elements from the show's past every five minutes.

THE SECRET OF SUCCESS

Steve Rogers, Suffolk (22-1089)
How can you produce, publish and mail another issue of **DWB** in just three weeks? **DWB#71** arrives, yet it's just three weeks since I received #70, yet it doesn't look rushed, sloppy or sub-standard - in fact it is an excellent issue! Please pass the secret of your success on to others!

The special feature on what the public think of **Doctor Who** was most enlightening, not least because it indicates that the BBC actually takes an interest in the series which is quite promising. Not so promising is that there will be no new series in 1990. We now have even more reason to campaign for a season of repeats - can the BBC **really** object to a repeat season of, say, 14 episodes ? My letter is already in the post...

By the way, isn't it funny how the titles of various JNT stories generally sum up 80's **Who (State of Decay, The Trial of a Time Lord, Survival...)** ?

Paul Lang, Glasgow (23-10-89)
I believe I can sum up my views on **DWB#71** in five short points:
a) The cover - not Sylvester staring mysteriously into the camara **again!!!**
b) The fantasy section gets better every month. I actually read it now, and more to the point - **enjoy** it!
c) Get rid of the press cuttings. What other purpose do they serve other than wasting space ? Other people do buy newspapers you know ?
d) Don't ever get rid of the bookcovers - they're one of the best bits!
e) Better paper ? How glossy can you get ?!
ED: As people don't generally tend to read more than one newspaper, it is our policy to publish the more interesting press cuttings as a service to readers.

EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED...

Paul Dumont, Oxford (23-10-89)
Alister Bladula's letter (DWB#71) was so OTT I thought it was a parody at first. What does the category of 'favourite writer' (re: Series Survey Results) have to do with "over-used FX and diabolically tacky acting"? What about the script itself ? Could a five-year-old have dreamt up the presentation of domestic racism, or the idea of the Doctor laying a careful trail to trap a foe - only to find he has two factions to deal with ? Yes, Aaronovitch **is** over-rated at the moment, but **Battlefield** will make his placing more realistic next time.

I hope Alister has heard Mark Ayres' score for **Ghost Light**. Perhaps he can now let us know how much he thinks it sounds like an effort by any previous composer.

"Colin Baker stories seemed to be more like what you expect from **Doctor Who**" he asserts. Like, I suppose, the obligatory returning monster, abysmal use of the companion by writers (which Cartmel is thankfully doing away with)... I expect the unexpected from **Doctor Who** - such as the wonderful scenes in **Ghost Light** in which the companion **deliberately** runs away from the Doctor, clowns in a hearse, the destruction of Skaro, meaningless Cyber-jazz... Situations as unexpected as those in the classics - the war criminal from the future revered as a god, death under the red cloth, the Doctor killing his President... I really do not want to expect **Timelash**, lots and lots of corridors, and lines (well, whole scripts) like part 14 of **Trial of a Time Lord**.

LIMITED IMAGINATIONS

David Houlgate, N.Yorkshire (21-10-89)
Ever since Target started printing **Doctor Who** books there have been some good ones and some really awful ones. Peter Linford, in **DWB#70**, mentions Terrance Dicks as a writer who knew what he was doing. Dicks' early books were brilliant **(The Auton Invasion, Day of the Daleks...)**. However, he fell into a groove during the late 70's/early 80's which mainly covered the third, fourth and eventually fifth Doctors in which his adaptions were bland and uninspiring with little character development. A lot of these stories had been televised classics **(The Robots of Death, Image of the Fendahl)**. I don't know exactly how many books there are, but I'll bet there's at least twenty-five where Dicks describes the Doctor as "That mysterious traveller in time and space known only as the Doctor", or the TARDIS as "A police box that wasn't a police box at all". Thankfully Dicks has improved again in recent years, although he still produces the odd duffer.

Moving on to **The Greatest Show in the Galaxy** book review in the same issue, and particularly Peter's criticism of the conjuring scenes. Why the fuss ? We all

know the Doctor is capable of doing them. Why ? Because he performed them twelve years ago in your all-time poll winner - **The Talons of Weng-Chiang!** As to why the circus was called The Psychic Circus, obviously this was because there were powers there that were outside the domain of physical law. After all, that is what psychic means. Hence the Doctor knew exactly when Ace would throw the medallion into the arena, or when the Gods would unleash their lightning bolts, rain, etc. The psychic influence could also be the reason why a piece of metal leapt into the Doctor's hand - either that or the sheer magnetism of McCoy's Doctor!

We shouldn't need explanations, though. If we can accept that the TARDIS is bigger inside that out, and that it can travel in time and space. If we can accept that the Doctor has two hearts and can regenerate, that there are Daleks and Cybermen, then surely we can accept the strange things that occurred in **Greatest Show.** Let's not limit our imaginations.

THE BAD AND THE GOOD

Martin Jackson, Surrey (18-10-89)
If I could add my thoughts to recent correspondence concerning **The Tomorrow People,** I would say that the series was both one of the best **and** one of the worst science fiction series produced in Britain. The quality of the episodes varied wildly between extremely good and utter rubbish. Unfortunately there were rather more of the latter, especially in later seasons. A Man For Emily, mentioned by Bryan Jenner, has to be one of the most ridiculous and embarrassing things I have ever seen on TV, but I also remember some extremely atmospheric and well-written stories - The Blue And The Green and Living Skins are two which come to mind.

STNG WRITERS CLARIFICATION

Kathleen Toth, Ohio, USA (22-10-89)
I wish to clarify why myself and Andrew Pixley disagree about the story credits in the **Star Trek: Next Generation** Season Two episode guide (ref:DWB#70). As I have commented in previous articles for **DWB,** the production and writing credits for **STNG** must be the most complicated ever devised. Episodes can have credits for "creative consultant", teleplay, story and/or writing in various combinations. This does not even touch the issue of who actually did the work on the script given, as indicated before, the considerable amount of reworking and fighting going on among the writers. I gave preference to the "Story by" credit over a "Teleplay by" credit on the same story, and always defer to "Written by" in any case where that occurs. This seemed preferable to taking up an extra page of space to go through all of the credits listed. I see no particular reason to prefer the teleplay credit to the story credit as Andrew does, but to each his own.

Everyone will be pleased to learn that the departure of Maurice Hurley and Tracey Torme actually seems to have brought relative peace and harmony under new "executive script consultant" Melinda Snodgrass, and that the scripts for the third season have been notably better through the first four episodes. Picard in particular seems to be the beneficiary of the change, but **DWB** readers will hear about that next issue...

Marion Breeze, Essex (20-10-89)
Star Trek V - what a terrible disappointment. It just wasn't right - too many things were out of character and quite jarring. There were only odd moments that I really liked, such as when Kirk is introduced to the "New Klingon Gunner", and there is Spock, large as life, and also some of the scenes between Spock and Sybok. McCoy's confrontation with his father's death was done well, and the final confrontation scene between Kirk, Spock, McCoy, Sybok and "God" was mostly very good. But too much of the film was just so wrong, like Spock doing a Superman impression to catch Kirk after he falls from the cliff, Uhura degrading herself doing that fan dance, and then fawning over Scottie. Some of the interplay between Kirk, Spock and McCoy was false - it was as if they were play-acting the legend of their relationship, it just wasn't natural. I hated the Klingon language, and I hated the "Quest for God" idea and the dewy-eyed drival as they find and explore "Heaven".

This is definitely William Shatner's film - he thinks he knows what the **Star Trek** phenomenon is all about, but he doesn't. He has missed the mark.

PLEASE SEND YOUR LETTERS OF COMMENT ON ANY ASPECT OF TELEVISION FANTASY TO THE EDITORIAL ADDRESS. TO AVOID YOUR VIEW BEING EDITED, PLEASE KEEP IT FAIRLY BRIEF AND, MORE IMPORTANTLY, TO THE POINT!

The Destroyer Cometh!

Season 26's opening story *Battlefield*, brought with it one of the most amazing monster creations of recent years. THE FRAME interviews the Destroyer's creators Sue Moore, Stephen Mansfield and Robert Allsopp.

- Also this issue, we talk to Colin Baker about his recent run in *Doctor Who – The Ultimate Adventure*, and how the tour has affected his feelings about *Doctor Who*.
- We take a look at David Fisher's script *The Gamble with Time*, which eventually became *City of Death*.
- Plus, John McElroy talks about the editing of the Titan Script Books – Sylvester McCoy meets the fans at Space Adventure, – and we take a look at the foreign *Doctor Who* novelisations.

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RAY HARRYHAUSEN'S 'CREATURES OF FANTASY'

RAY HARRYHAUSEN, grand master of cinematic special effects and a living legend in the field of stop motion animation, has created a unique universe - a universe on show in The Museum Of The Moving Image (MOMI) exhibition, 'Creatures of Fantasy'.

Harryhausen is responsible for many classic moments in films, such as the Seventh Voyage Of Sinbad, Clash Of The Titans and Jason And The Argonauts. He has created and animated weird and wonderful creatures including a band of marauding skeletons, Kali - a six-armed goddess, and Medusa, whose mere glance can turn a man to stone!

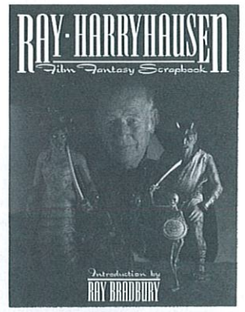
MOMI's 300 square feet exhibition space on the mezzanine floor has been given over to a wonderful world of huge monsters, intricate models, and mysterious doorways charting a golden voyage of discovery. The secrets of Harryhausen's innovatory process of Dynamation is revealed in one exhibit, illustrated with video clips, while others present fascinating insights into his influences and those whom he, in turn, has influenced.

With over 40 years of film-making experience to draw from, the exhibition represents very well every stage of Ray Harryhausen's career, concentrating on the feature films but not forgetting his early shorts.

The exhibition runs at MOMI in London's National Film Theatre up until March 18th 1990. Call 01-928 3535 for further information.

IN PRINT

Tieing in with the exhibition is Ray Harryhausen's Fantasy Scrapbook published by Titan Books at £8.95. In it Harryhausen shares his secrets through a wealth of photographic material from his own personal collection - over 300 photographs in all including an 8-page colour section - plus rare pre-production sketches.



BRIEFLY...

THE PRODUCERS of the new BSB space soap **Jupiter's Moon** (see last month's exclusive report) have decided to change the title of the series and are running a competition - in conjunction with Broadcast magazine - to come up with a new title.

The series, you'll remember, is about a space academy which orbits one of the moons of Jupiter. Entries so far have suggested punning titles ranging from Scholar Ship to Star Tech and Star Terms.

Series producers Primetime-Andromeda are offering a £500 prize and a bottle of champagne to the originator of the name they finally decide to use, if any. Competition entries should be sent to: Jupiter's Moon Competition, Broadcast, 2nd Floor, 7 Swallow Place, London W1R 7AA, or faxed on 01-355 3177. MJ

THE SAINT is in for an uncertain future following the suspension of the new Simon Dutton series after just two episodes. Although LWT are committed to showing the remaining four films next year, it is unlikely a further series will be made. The blame for its ratings flop has been put on its lack of action, excitement, and sex!

Paul Bonner, ITV's head of planning, recently confirmed: "The whole question of The Saint is currently under review."

THE ACTOR who plays **Superboy** in the excruciating US series has been recast. Gerard Christopher replaces John Haymes Newton after Newton demanded an increased fee which the producers were not prepared to pay. Also leaving the series are young Lex Luthor actor Scott Wells. The new season will pit **Superboy** against such 'foes' as Bizarro, Metallo and Young Dracula!

UK RATINGS for **Beauty and the Beast** - on peak-time on Friday nights - average 5.4 million while **Lost in Space** has been garnering 3.45 million, in some cases bettering **Doctor Who!**

A NEW SERIES of **Zorro** is being produced in Spain, as a co-production between New World Television and two French companies. Playing the swash-buckling hero - and following in the z-marks of Douglas Fairbanks, Tyrone Power and Guy Williams - is Duncan Regehr, who has appeared in V and The Monster Squad. The series will consist of 22 episodes.

A THREE-HOUR mini-series is being produced chronicling the doomed 1986 space shuttle flight of Challenger. School teacher Christa McAuliffe, the only civilian on the flight, is to be played by Karen Allen.

TALES FROM THE CRYPT, the Home Box Office series based on the 1950's EC horro comics - the first of which were helmed by now major directors such as Robert (Roger Rabbit) Zemekis, Richard (Superman II) Donner and Walter (Streets Of Fire/48 Hours) Hill - has been given the green light for a further 19 episodes.

HOT ON THE HEELS of the cartoon series drawn from the movie **Ghostbusters,** a whole host of SF fantasy movies are about to become cartoon TV series as Warner Brothers revitalises its animation division. The cartoon series under consideration include Beetlejuice (the Michael Keaton film), and the Spielberg productions Gremlins and The Goonies.

A RATINGS FALL in the third series of the US alien sitcom ALF (that's Alien Life Form, whose first and second series are currently showing on ITV and SKY) has prompted the producers to make the character whackier and more alien. They fear Alf has become too much a part of the human family he has joined. Expect weirder things soon... MJ

CATHERINE MEETS BEASTLY DEMISE

THE NEWS that 'Beauty and the Beast's' Catherine, played by actress Linda Hamilton (left) will be tortured and murdered, when the third season opens with a two-hour special as a mid-season replacement any week now, has been met with anger from the show's fans.

In the storyline (don't read beyond this point if you don't wish to know), Catherine has become pregnant by Vincent, but is captured by an evil character called Gabriel who imprisons her and sadistically tortures her for months. After giving birth Catherine is injected with a lethal drug as she begs for mercy, but she dies in Vincent's arms. The rest of the series is spent with Vincent in search of his baby, and Catherine's killers.

"All great love stories necessarily end in' tragedy", defends producer Ron Koslow against distressed fans' cries of "It's damned distateful!" and "It distorts what we felt was a lovely, poetic series"...

STAR TREK: THE PRESENT DEGENERATION

IN RECENT YEARS, 'Doctor Who' fans may have felt they were living in the wrong country. It seemed that every other nation on Earth was getting a better deal, Who-wise, than us.

Meanwhile, as the Doctor's fortunes waned, **Star Trek** was on the ascendant. **Star Trek** got repeats, regular **un-edited** video releases, and **Star Trek** books were taking over the shops, whilst the **Doctor Who** sections sank to one (or two) small shelves. It was almost enough to make one become a Trekkie.

Not any more. Suddenly **Star Trek** fans know exactly what it feels like to be treated as second-class viewers. To put it mildly, CIC Video's introduction of **Star Trek - The Next Generation** to British audiences has been a disaster, an epic of grandiose incompetence to rival Baldrick's "cunning plans". Right from the start, it appears, CIC's right hand has not known what the left hand is doing.

There's been much confusion as to **STNG**'s fate. At first it was going to be sold to television. Then we were told it had been sold to the B B C, but that they were forbidden to show it until 1990. Recent articles in Radio Times and TV Guide must cast doubt on this - even the B B C do not seem sure if they've bought it or not! Finally we were told it would be shown on TV in 1990 **after** video release. All well and good - at least we get to see it, and CIC's **Trek** record was, at that time, impeccable. Indeed, it was generally assumed that the **Next Generation** releases would follow the pattern set by **Star Trek** - one tape per month at budget price, with the episodes unedited and in their original US transmission order.

It was not to be. When **Encounter at Farpoint** finally crept into the video shops, it was aimed firmly at the rental market - to **buy** it cost a good £60 ($96)!! The same has been true of the nine releases since.

The rationale behind this was simple. With the long-awaited, eagerly anticipated new series of **Star Trek** available mainly on rental, CIC were confident of a stampede to the video shops. Even those with only a passing interest in **Trek** would surely rent at least once ? As for the die-hard Trekkers, eager to see each episode many times, they would rent the titles again and again - and the real completists would cough up an exhorbitant sixty pounds per tape just to own top quality copies of the new show, wouldn't they ?

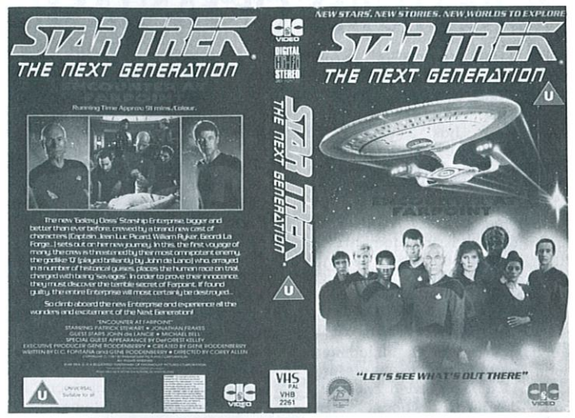
This is the logic one usually expects from B B C Video - the logic of short-sighted businessmen who know nothing about their own customers. It is disappointing to see such stupidity being displayed by a branch of Paramount, whose record with fandom is usually quite good (better than Auntie's, at any rate!).

The theory's total piffle, of course. The vast majority of Trekkers rent the tapes only once, and have the services of two VCR's close at hand when they do (after all, the cost of six tapes alone would amply cover the price of a decent quality VCR). Yes, I'm talking of (shock, horror!) **video piracy**, an illegal act CIC are, in effect, **encouraging**! Thereafter the episodes are theirs to watch repeatedly, and CIC ironically loses money. A few die-hard fans **may** buy the tapes, but their numbers must surely be negligable, far less than would buy the tapes at budget price (and there are few people mean enough to pirate a tape they could purchase for under a tenner!).

From a fan's viewpoint, the releases have been mishandled in other ways too. The big bone of contention is the joining together of episodes. The reasons for it are baffling - just **who** is this vandalism supposed to please ? Not the fans, surely - they're spitting blood about it. The ordinary non-Trekkers, perhaps ? But surely it is self-evident that each tape contains **two** episodes ? There are two titles on the packaging, and even a total Trevor will notice that when one story finishes and another begins halfway through the tape - CIC even put a helpful caption there, to notify the less-alert viewer! So why try to kid people they're getting a feature ? What dire consequences do CIC fear if their audience has to sit through an extra credits and title sequence ?

The most annoying side effect of this policy (apart from the way the climax of the second episode's pre-credits sequence usually fade straight to a "Captain's Log" entry telling us what they've just seen!) is the running of **two** sets of credits at the start of each tape. This is especially aggravating on the classic episode **The Big Goodbye**, where the credits almost threaten to overrun the entire show!

Why do they still do it ? Well, the best explanation I can think of is that CIC hope to make money from rentals **now**, and make even more in a few years time by releasing the show onto the sell-through market in uncut form, so that even fans who bought



the £60 releases will wish to buy them. Alas, this explanation credits CIC with commercial abilities which they have, so far, singularly failed to demonstrate.

The plan to make a mint from rentals depended on a decent programme of distribution and publicity - and both have been abysmal. The release of **Farpoint** was the best publicised, with posters in video shops, some exceptionally facile press coverage, and Patrick Stewart braving various chat shows (one suspects it was pure fluke that Mr.Stewart happened to be in Britain at the time, but we'll let that pass). The posters continued only until **Haven** and **The Big Goodbye** and press coverage soon died out. These days the show is so badly publicised that certain video shop owners don't even know **what** they're stocking, and believe **STNG** to be another **Star Trek** movie, whilst The Guardian recently informed us that Patrick Stewart "plays Captain Kirk in **Star Trek - The Next Generation**"!!

Bad distribution has exacerbated the problem. Most video outlets **did** stock **Farpoint**, and some got further, but a great many gave up on the show soon after. Their reasons range from the bizarre ("Well, a series just keeps coming") to the ill-informed ("Well, it'll be on television soon anyway!"), and CIC appear to have made no attempt to persuade such dealers to change their minds, or to alert them to **STNG**'s unique potential. **Why** aren't they out there selling their product ? **Why** haven't the dealers been told that the show **won't** be on TV soon, and in the meantime it is exclusive to **them** and thousands are eager to see it ? **Why** haven't the dealers who are reluctant to stock a series been alerted to the great potential for repeat business which a series offers - if the customers like the show, they'll be back every month eager for the next release. Surely it's the answer to a video shop's prayers ?

Because of this patchy distribution, many people who want to see **STNG** cannot do so and a lot of rental outlets are missing a potential goldmine - I know, because I am fortunate enough to have a local dealer who **has** stuck with the show. He has stocked every release, put up every poster and spread the word. His reward is that **STNG** is immensely popular in my neighbourhood. He tells me he cannot get the new releases fast enough, and there is always a long waiting list for each tape. This could be happening nationwide if CIC played their cards right.

Unfortunately, as my stockist would be first to agree, the releases aren't coming out fast enough to satisfy demand. CIC have pursued a plodding schedule, releasing one tape every two months - if you're lucky. The result is that whilst America launches Season Three, Britain has yet to reach the end of Season One! With the US magazines full of Season Two, is it any wonder that impatient British fans have taken to more illicit sources ? Optical conversions of Season Two are already available in Britain, at a price. The quality varies, but at least the episodes can be seen. Wait for CIC to catch up and you might just die of old age. Meanwhile, some people are making a lot of money out of **their** incompetence, yet CIC have only themselves to blame for the flourishing video black market.

Other complaints must include the departure from the US transmission order, which is about to have unintentionally hilarious consequences. CIC's policy is clear enough - each release pairs a weaker episode with a stronger one, so no tape ever (in theory) ever carries two 'weak' episodes. However, this is about to backfire as we reach the death of Tasha Yar. The most recent release paired the Tasha story **The Arsenal of Freedom** with the post-Tasha **We'll always have Paris.** Non-fans will surely wonder (a) where Tasha has gone, and (b) why is Worf suddenly Chief of Security ?

The next release pairs **Skin of Evil** (Tasha's death) and the post-Tasha **Conspiracy**, but after that CIC is releasing **The Neutral Zone**, a post-Tasha story, with **Symbiosis**, in which the last Lt.Yar is still alive and well!! Heaven only knows what non-fans will make of this unexplained apparent resurrection!

To add insult to injury, CIC have announced that two episodes, **Home Soil** and **Too Short A Season**, will not be released in Britain at all for "technical reasons"! Well, frankly, that's not good enough. The fans want to see them, and if CIC won't provide them other people will, and CIC will lose yet more money.

Thanks to this catalogue of incompetence, **Star Trek - The Next Generation** is virtually unknown in Britain. Outside fandom, few people know of its existance. I wish I had a pound for every person who has regarded my **STNG** magazines in bewilderment and asked "What's that, then?". I also wish I had a pound for every reply of "What, no Spock?" when I explained!

This ignorance again is costing CIC's parent company, Paramount, and their licensed merchandisers money. There's lots of excellent **STNG** merchandise, but very little has reached Britain except via SF merchandisers - a very limited market. I know of only one chain store and mail order catalogue which stocks the splendid Galoob figures - after all, how many would they sell ? A few shops stock the model NCC-1701-D, but I've witnessed innumerable children jeering that it "looks nuffink like the Enterprise" and mumbling "Wot's **Star Trek - The Next Generation** anyway?". The Titan books have penetrated W.H.Smiths, but words cannot express my despair when a sales assistant in the Huddersfield branch, seeking out **The Children of Hamlin** for me, asked her supervisor "Is this anything to do with **real Star Trek**?". The sad thing is that **Trek** is **big** news. I'm told it's the latest trendy cult, the "in-thing". **The Next Generation** could be capitalising on this, with a resultant cash bonanza for Paramount and CIC. It didn't even need a television sale - just a better-publicised, better handled video release. Ideally the series should have gone straight onto the sell-through market, spearheading a major breakthrough in the video industry. Instead it has been left to Warner Brothers' impending Rain Man and Batman releases to establish the precedent for new material going straight onto the sales market.

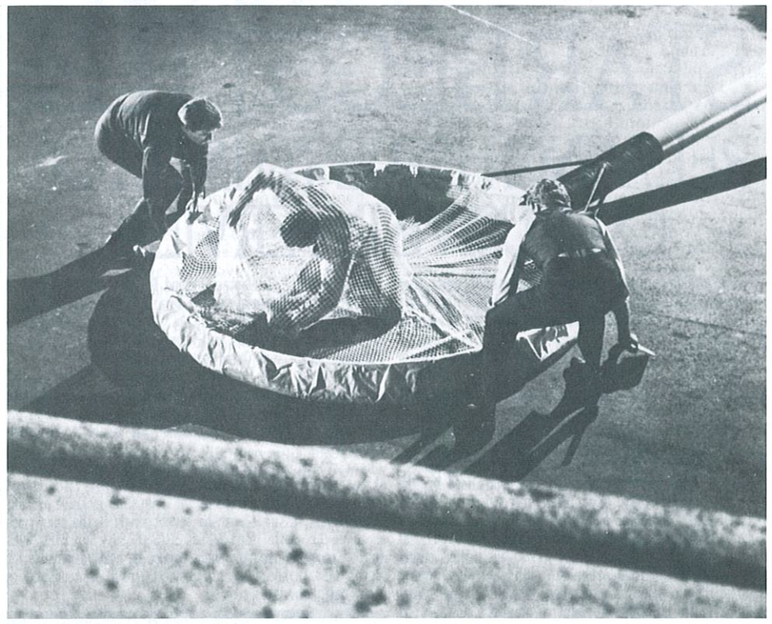
At time of writing, Season One of **Star Trek - The Next Generation** has reportedly been made available to British television. TV Guide reports that bidding is underway, again casting doubts on reports that the B B C bought the rights back in 1987. This good news, though, is marred by CIC's announcement that Season Two will not appear on video until 1991 at the earliest! No doubt they believe that once the public have seen Season One on TV, they will all dash out and rent Season Two - but what about those of us who've seen Season One already ? The show's real fans will be driven back to the pirates yet again.

Meanwhile, what will our TV stations do to Season One ? Will the Beeb ban some episodes and move the title sequence, as they did with **Star Trek** ? Or worse, could I T V get it and start **forgetting** episodes á la **Beauty and the Beast** ? And will we **ever** see **Too Short A Season** and **Home Soil** ?

Bring me up, Chief O'Brien. I'm in trouble.

TIM MUNRO

ENTERING THE LAND OF THE GIANTS



FOLLOWING their very successful screening of the entire series of 'Lost in Space', Channel 4 are now embarking on a screening of another Irwin Allen SF series, 'Land of the Giants'.

The series, the fourth Allen produced, is going out on Sunday lunch times in the old **Lost in Space** slot, and Channel 4 are hopeful it will attract the same audience. They intend to begin by screening the first series to test the waters before embarking on the second.

The series follows the adventures of a group of people who vanish into space. It is 1983 (well, that **was** the future in 1968!), and the space plane Spindrift is on a sub-oriental flight to London when it passes through a convenient "electrical storm" before entering a very strange white cloud.. The seven passengers on board never reach London, emerging instead in a world very similar to their own, except for one vital difference - everything is twelve times larger! They are in the Land of the Giants!

During the series the passengers and crew of the Spindrift, the "little people", played by Gary Conway, Don Marshall, Don Matheson, Heather Young, Deanna Lund, Kurt Kasznar and Stefan Arngrim, are menaced by cats, terrorised by insects, imprisoned in a dolls house, rendered helpless by simple things like sellotape and almost skewered by a paper clip!

Undoubtedly the biggest thing about the show was its budget. At around $250,000 per episode it was (believe it or not) the most expensive series in American TV history up to that point. The series ran from 1968 through to 1970, with a total of 51 episodes. Unlike **Lost in Space**, all the episodes were in colour.

The series, which deposits normal people in a situation like Lemuel Gulliver in Brobdingnag, encountered many technical problems in meeting challenges like the creation of a giant slice of bread - finally made from a four-foor slab of sponge rubber; a six-foot pencil and a nine-foot revolver. All the props look very good on screen - but such extravagence was expensive. Furthermore, many optical and photographic tricks go a long way towards enlivening the show and placing the "little people" in perilous situations.

The characters created throughout Irwen Allen's TV career, of which **Land of the Giants** was his last, had lost themselves above (**Land of the Giants**) and below (**Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea**) the seas, somewhere in time (**The Time Tunnel**) and in space (**Lost in Space**). The financial returns from the phenomenal success of these rather limited shows paved the way for Allen's brief success in the motion picture world during the seventies.

NEXT ISSUE: Complete Season One Episode Guide to 'Land of the Giants'.

By Mark James

DOCTOR WHO

VARIATIONS ON A THEME

IT'S NOT DIFFICULT to see why the BBC so jealously guard their rights to the 'Doctor Who' theme.

It is a wonderful piece of music, and it has been ill-treated and bastardised many times over the years. Unfortunately the precautions the BBC take, the haggling and negotiations for the rights to use both the theme as a basis for a series of musical interpretations, and for the rights to issue a commercial recording bearing the words **Doctor Who** at all (in any recognisably logo-like copyrighted typeface) have prevented the release of this record, until now! The perseverance of Andy Grant, the man whose team has brought light, sound and vision to the last couple of DWAS conventions, has paid off in the shape of this musical curio...

The record has been issued as a four-track 12". Now, give three composers who have worked on the series a couple of minutes each to fill, and instructions to extemporise around the theme, and the result is a genuinely interesting mixture of style and skill. Funny how times change. Times, and tempos, too. Three tracks are based around the original theme, and all choose to alter the tempo of the original to produce different moods.

The first piece, **Doctor Who - Mood Version** (3.14 approx.) is by Mark (**Greatest Show, Ghost Light, Curse of Fenric**) Ayres. Probably the most faithful to its source, the first of Mark's two tracks on the record is a ponderous piece, most reminiscent of the Pertwee era. The faithful John Carpenter/Hallowe'en base line and the sweeping and soaring tones somehow mingle together so that the result is surprisingly lightweight, and still moody and evocative.

The second version, **Doctor Who - Terror Version** (4.14) by Dominic (**Trial of a Time Lord, Dragonfire, The Happiness Patrol, Survival**) Glyn emerges from a dreamy, almost choral atmospheric wash. Making good use of the stereo image interpreted by the brain, it begins as a haunting, melancholy distant cry. A deep bell-like tolling introduces a startling multi-layered version of the theme proper. It is over in two minutes, not wasted, before a strident and forceful - definitely big-screen - theme floods the sound arena, backed by a catchy piano rag.

The second side of the record begins with Keff (**Time and the Rani, Paradise Towers, Delta and the Bannermen, Remembrance of the Daleks, Silver Nemesis, Battlefield**) McCulloch's **Doctor Who - Latin Version**, and definitely outstays its welcome at a hefty six minutes and thirty-five seconds. It begins like Dominic's Terror version, but with more spot sound effects, spangly bits and whizzes and such-like which we have come to expect from this composer. After a minute or so, suddenly a rat-a-tat cymbal and a guitar join the mêlée. More piano, but not noticeably from the theme or to its tempo. I cannot think of a better description of the rest than the one I'm borrowing from Richard Sayer's Starburst review: it's **Doctor Who** meets Shakatak(!). If you like Shakatak, then I suggest that you play something by them. If you like your **Doctor Who** music in a traditional mould, then stick to side one, or seek out either Dominic Glyn's Black Light cassette or Mark Ayres' excellent Myth Makers tape. If you like Keff McCulloch's era-wrenching, overblown and theatrical music, then there's the **Doctor Who** 25th Anniversary Album, and his score for the video release (only) of White Mischief (which replaced the cinematic, and commercially available, score by George Fenton). Frankly I'm tired of McCulloch's compositions. They may have suited **Time and the Rani**, but to underpin something like **Battlefield** something more delicate is required. "Fun" it may be, Richard Sayer, but I can think of a better word for it...

The fourth track is, after three variations on the theme, a welcome change. Initially composed for the DWAS' PanoptiCon VIII by Mark Ayres, the **PanoptiCon VIII - Regeneration Mix** (5.35) is an original piece, guaranteed to bring back memories of Gordon Roxburgh's last convention as organiser. It is very evocative of that weekend (for those that were there, naturally!), and brings to mind the brilliant title sequence that it accompanied. Somehow, it is more in the spirit of the theme than the other three tracks, even though it strings no more than a couple of notes of the theme together! It's a nicely up-tempo piece of music which almost defies anyone to dislike it, and it more than adequately brings the record to a close.

Andy Grant tells me he's planning to release a square CD single in the new year (he even has a working prototype!). Another **Doctor Who** first! So, unless you're waiting for the CD, it's off to Our Price!

JULIAN KNOTT

THE Whocible

THE FANZINE WITH INTEGRITY !!

THE RETURN OF 'STAR BEGOTTEN'

RELAUNCH ISSUE TO INCLUDE EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

Fandom was last night reeling at the shock news from **Staraker Publishing** that they are re-launching their highly-acclaimed fanzine, **Star Begotten**, after an absence of almost nine months.

Speaking from SP's Leeds offices, senior editor Nick Cooper revealed that the return of the 'zine will not come empty-handed. Issue 12 will feature an exclusive interview with Russell Enoch - better known to fans as William 'Ian Chesterton' Russell - in which the actor reminisces on his time on **Dr Who** and his acting career both before and since.

In his capacity as political correspondent, Cooper considers the current legal and practical position of centralised **Dr Who** appreciation in the UK. If (as seems increasingly likely) the DWAS collapses, will fandom be scattered, or is there still hope for the rapidly decaying organisation? Is the DWAS **really** as difficultly "unique" as its Executive has always implied, or can we learn something from other fan clubs and appreciation societies? Best-selling authoress Lady Olga Bitch pens a **very** personal and libellous account of August's Honey Comb convention, while theatre correspondent and assistant editor Mark Wright looks back at Colin Baker's performance in 'The Ultimate Adventure'.

Contributing editor Tim Munro assesses the new-found standing of 'The Faceless Ones' in light of the recovery of episode 3, and well-known fan writer David Gibbs reviews episode 3 of 'The Enemy of the World' - the odd-story-out in the famous "Monster Season."

As Sylvester McCoy wobbles uneasily through his third season, Daniel O'Mahony embarks on an in-depth look at Season 24. After the fiasco of *The Trial of a Time Lord*, many fans thought things could only get better. Just how wrong were we?

The realms of Telefantasy beyond **Dr Who** are also covered in the form of **Doomwatch, Red Dwarf, A Very British Coup** and **The Black and Blue Lamp**. On top of all these, there are liberal doses of SP's well-known satiric wit in the form of 'Paradwas Towers' and 'Great Moments in Who History'.

Issue 12 of **Star Begotten**, running to 68 pages, can be obtained from: Staraker Publishing, 4 Wood View, Albert Promenade, Halifax, HX3 0HH. Cheques or Postal Orders for £2.10 (£1.65 + 45p P&P) should be made payable to 'Staraker Publishing'.

As a special offer to *Whocible* readers, the complete Vol. 3 of **Star Begotten** (132 page issue 9/10, 68 page issue 11 and issue 12) can be purchased for only £7.10 inclusive of P&P. Alternatively, issue 12 can be bought singly at the same price as issue 11, while issue 9/10 is £3.45 (£2.95 + 50p P&P). SAEs may be sent, but the publishers cannot be held responsible for issues lost in the post as a result of insufficient postage or poor quality envelopes sent.

ALSO INSIDE:

BBC VIDEO TO EMPLOY OFFICIAL DEATH SQUADS !!
DWASNOST WILL PREVAIL (MAYBE)
NOT MUCH REAL NEWS REALLY ...

interview

"THE PURCHASE by Coast To Coast of the rights to make a 'Doctor Who' movie must be seen as only a phase in a very lengthy process.

"Investment finance, script development, casting, finding the right director, distribution and production deals, plus the time required for the technical research and development of a film of this kind, are very complex and time-consuming matters, especially for a small independent company. Clearly, if all the finance had been in place from day one, then the process would be that much further along the road to completion - but that's not how things work in film-making. The fact is that Coast To Coast have single-mindedly devoted all their energies to making this project a reality, but one that has to be on **their** terms, which again slows things up.

"The ideal order of events would be for the movie to come out **before Doctor Who** reappears in 1991. This would give the new producers the opportunity to benefit from changes that have evolved during the translation to the big screen. All parties have a vested interest in developing the format and not being in direct and pointless conflict with each other. I believe that **Doctor Who** is long overdue for rethinking and revision. The format must be expanded and projected forward, not only dramatically, but also to increase its audience base. The movie will, I believe, bring in a whole new audience and increase awareness of **Doctor Who** and everything to do with it. This is why I think the movie should appear before a new, revamped TV series."

It has been suggested that cinemagoers might not take a 'Doctor Who' film seriously. Byrne does not share this pessimism.

"I don't believe that when someone goes to see a film, their first consideration is whether or not to take it seriously. I would order the priorities somewhat differently. Firstly, the audience has to be entertained. And it can only be entertained if it is hooked by what is happening on-screen - events that are believable, in a story that makes sense, is believable, one that has the power to move, excite, thrill or whatever. If an audience responds to feelings of this kind, then they are being entertained - in other words, taking it seriously. There were aspects of Raiders Of The Lost Ark, for example, that were totally unbelievable, but the mix of entertainment, fun and excitement that surrounded these unbelievable moments was strong enough to supress doubts about glitches in the storytelling. I would like to think that such moments are absent from our script. We've gone for a story that we believe will entertain a very broad-based audience, one that will thrill, excite, move feelings, incite fear and make them laugh. A story which, in the final analysis, is also true to its originating source."

Ever since the film was first mooted, there has been speculation as to who would play the lead. One of the names that has frequently been mentioned is Donald Sutherland, for whose casting Byrne is himself very keen:

"This is an entirely personal preference. It's terribly important that you have an idea in your mind as to the character/personality that you're writing for. I've always had in the back of my mind someone who approximated to my favourite Doctor, Tom Baker. In terms of ability, image, sense of strangeness and true alien

WITH THE 'COAST TO COAST' FILM NOW BACK ON THE CARDS, SCREENPLAY WRITER JOHNNY BYRNE GIVES D W B THE LOW-DOWN ON THE 'DOCTOR WHO' MOVIE WORLD...

character, Baker was, I believe, supreme. More practically, in the context of a very expensive feature film, the lead would also have to be someone acceptable in the international sense which, vitally, includes America. For that reason my preference has been for Donald Sutherland ever since his name was floated for the rôle. He has worked with the very best American and European directors and he understands, and is in tune with, European rhythms of film-making. So it will not be a complete culture shock for the Doctor, traditionally English, to be played by someone like Sutherland. He is, I believe, a man for all seasons, a universal actor, one that would immeasurably enhance the character portrayed in the story."

Another actor, with more definite links to the film, is Caroline Munro. Her involvement, it seems, remains, but Byrne urges caution in interpreting this fact:

"It would be untrue to say that a rôle was specifically written for Caroline. There is, however, a leading character in the script, one which existed in the original draft from which I worked. This character has gone through many changes and permutations but it is now fixed in place and integral to the story. I have nothing to do with the casting, but I know enough about this character to know that an actress of Caroline Munro's looks, talents and experience uniquely qualify her for this rôle."

Coast To Coast's aim is to do a trilogy of films, which raises the question of whether there would be three totally unconnected stories, or whether the producers would plot out in advance a sequence of interlinked tales.

"In a general sense it's characters that provide the connecting link in movie sequels of this kind. It so happens that we have developed a character who is very strong; a tragic, heroic figure, a mature character who is on a level with the Doctor in terms of respect and abilities. We need someone like this to reveal new aspects of the Doctor's character, aspects that are difficult to explore in his traditional interaction with the companion/s which has, by its nature, tended to be overly paternal. A character like this - Hans Solo in Star Wars was another - can provide a vital bridge in movie sequels of this kind. As to whether this particular character will return in a second story, though is still an open question at this point."

One pledge that the producers have given is to 'retain the spirit of the television series'. Byrne has firm ideas on how this should be done:

"The way I see it, the most **essential** element, the one central to the **Doctor Who** format, is the nature of the conflict - a struggle between good and evil; the Doctor taking sides with the weak, the innocent, the threatened against the forces of the strong, the powerful, the downright evil. This kind of epic conflict is the crux of **Doctor Who.** Every story has been pretty much a variation on this theme, a theme that has been considerably amplified in the script for the first movie. However, those familiar with the tales I have written for the TV show will be aware that though the basic issues of good and evil are clear cut, I have always tried to shade the characters of the villains. In **Arc of Infinity**, for example, I tried to make it so that the audience would see the human dimension to Omega's predicament. I believe this to be an essential requirement of drama. One must try to show why characters are as they are, rather than just present them in purely two-dimensional terms.

"So it is that in the script, while our mega villain may be irredeemably evil, he must register all the more strongly if we are to understand something of why he came to be so. Also, the evil is personified in a way that we have never seen before, simply because it was not possible to do so in the context of the TV **Doctor Who.** For the rest, while we have taken liberties with some aspects of the traditional format, these are not at variance with our understanding of the character and his universe - they have, at the very least, extended the formidable corpus of knowledge that already exists concerning Doctor Who."

Johnny Byrne was not the original scriptwriter for the movie. The first draft was written by Mark Ezra, an American writer who had previously worked with producers George Dugdale and Peter Litton.

"After the first draft, George and Peter felt they needed someone who could project a certain kind of character-driven drama. Apparently they contacted the agencies, and when my CV eventually flopped through the letter box George said 'Let's talk to that guy'. Since then we have worked very closely. We restructured the whole thing and a completely new concept evolved. This process continues. Some changes stem from George and Peter, others I initiate myself. Generally, the essence of screen-writing is retrospective. A good screenplay is a many-layered thing, an essentially retrospective process in the making, and one with no finite point of completion. I'm very fortunate to have had the opportunity to develop the script in this way. My creative relationship with Peter and George is very close. Though we are happy with the script at this point, we see its development continuing up to the point of shooting. It happens of course that writers are rolled aside and their work taken in hand by other writers - it did, after all, happen with me and Mark Ezra. Obviously, if someone else could produce a better screenplay, then George and Peter would be duty bound to set him to work without delay. But, as I said, we're all happy about the way things have worked out so far."

With nothing yet certain, Byrne is properly reticent about saying too much on who might be employed to direct the film, but he was able to confirm a previous D W B news item that high-powered director, Ken >

BRITAIN AND AMERICA RECENTLY HELD THEIR PREMIERE 'DOCTOR WHO' CONVENTIONS OF THE YEAR - ONE STEEPED IN CONTROVERSY, THE OTHER MAKING UP FOR THE LACK OF A DWAS PANOPTICON...

TIMELORD '89

Reviewed by Kathleen Toth

IT WAS THE BEST of times and the worst of times...or maybe a quote from 'Rashomon' would be more appropriate as commentary on Timelord '89, since a controversy over why some of the expected guests were not present threatened at times to overshadow what was, by other measures, an unusually successful convention.

Attendance was the best in years, with official figures of around 1,000, with 800 representing three-day passes. And people certainly seemed to enjoy themselves for the most part, however puzzled they might have been by the 'other' happenings...

Credit for the good atmosphere that prevailed belongs in large measure to the two principal guests, Terry Nation and Anthony Ainley, who were very giving of their time and attention throughout the weekend despite the inevitable long autograph lines and genral uproar. An additional boost was provided by the showing of the first two broadcast episodes of the new season. **Battlefield** was extremely well-received and immediately rated as one of the best stories in years by many who saw it, even though in incomplete form! There is certain to be increased pressure on local PBS stations to acquire Season 26 as soon as possible; the question will be how Lionheart responds to this in the wake of complaints from fans that it has been driving away PBS stations with unreasonable contract demands.

...CONT'D FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

Russell, had once been involved:

"As I understand it, there was second hand, but not direct, interest by Ken Russell in directing the film. It was an interest that related to a much earlier version of the script. Now that both the script and funding have altered, the question of who will direct has yet to be decided. One thing is sure: whoever is eventually chosen to direct will have a very technically complicated task on his hands. Peter and George always intended to be very active and strong producers. One of the reasons the film has been slow coming to fruition is because of their absolute belief in **Doctor Who** and their determination to avoid it being compromised - a vital consideration, I suspect, in the BBC's decision to allow them the exclusive rights.

"**Doctor Who - The Timelord** has never been in better shape. The script has been re-written to take account of a seriously increased budget. The very best design work has been done on the characters and aliens, and they're talking to a well-considered director who is keen to be involved. My gut reaction is that some time around the end of the year, the brakes will ease and the initial stages of production will be up and running."

JOHNNY BYRNE, THANK YOU VERY MUCH

Transcribed by Peter Linford from an interview conducted by Gary Leigh and Peter Linford on October 15th, 1989.

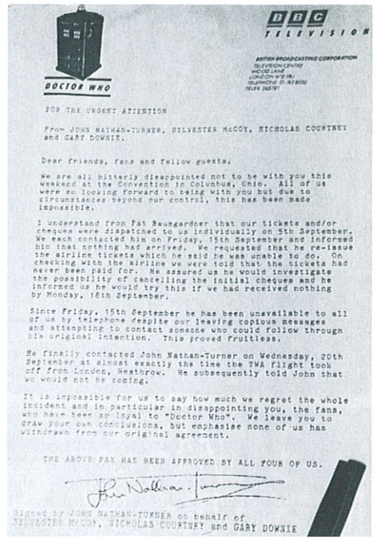
Anthony Ainley discussed the Master's new costume, which turned out to be less comfortable than he had hoped, and seemed quite pleased to have had the opportunity to get into a physical conflict with the Doctor this season. Terry Nation was very critical of the quality of the scripts being used on **Doctor Who** in recent years, saying that the script writers obviously did not care about the show or had not been made to care. He indicated that he would love to do something for **Doctor Who** again but had not been asked.

There were also a number of fan discussion panels, trivia and costume contests, displays of fan-produced newsletters and fiction, and an ample supply of goods in the dealers' room. A draft script for the **Batman** movie, that included scenes for Robin and which was signed by Michael Keaton, went for the sum of $47 to a very lucky buyer at the charity auction, though it should be noted there was a very low attendance for this due to its less than spectacular handling!

GUESTS CONTROVERSY

The goal of the convention was to have a purely **Doctor Who** event which would be of reasonable cost and stay fully solvent. As already noted, **Doctor Who** conventions in America have been in decline and recent fan cons have had difficulty meeting their expenses while ticket costs have reached levels once seen only for Spirit of Light conventions. The proposal to do the convention was first put together by Pat Baumgardner in the Spring of 1988. At that time he planned to invite a number of fan guests of honour and to have one celebrity guest, Anthony Ainley. He asked for volunteers to help and areas of responsibility were assigned. Expert advice on doing a convention was to be supplied by the group of fan 'guests', which included Ron(DWFCA)Katz, Jean Airey, Laurie Haldeman and Gail Bennett. When early responses to advertisements for the convention was good there began to be talk of possibly adding more guests, but from the beginning Pat Baumgardner basically decided who would be invited and he handled all contracts regarding that aspect of the convention.

Between autumn 1988 and spring 1989 Nicholas Courtney, John Nathan-Turner and Gary Downie, and, lastly, Terry Nation, were all added as guests. Each of these changes was presented to the convention staff as a fait accompli, although there had at times been discussion of the merits of adding various people if the opportunity arose. There was no announcement to the staff that Sylvester McCoy might be coming; this was to be a surprise. The staff were told two weeks before the convention that Nicholas Courtney would not be attending but that John Levene


BBC
TELEVISION
DOCTOR WHO
FOR THE URGENT ATTENTION
From JOHN NATHAN-TURNER, SYLVESTER McCOY, NICHOLAS COURTNEY and GARY DOWNIE.
Dear friends, fans and fellow guests,
We are all bitterly disappointed not to be with you this weekend at the Convention in Columbus, Ohio. All of us were so looking forward to being with you but due to circumstances beyond our control, this has been made impossible.
I understand from Pat Baumgardner that our tickets and/or cheques were dispatched to us individually on 5th September. We each contacted him on Friday, 15th September and informed him that nothing had arrived. We requested that he re-issue the airline tickets which he said he was unable to do. On checking with the airlines we were told that the tickets had never been paid for. We assured us he would investigate the possibility of cancelling the initial cheques and he informed us he would try this if we had received nothing by Monday, 18th September.
Since Friday, 15th September he has been unavailable to all of us by telephone despite our leaving copious messages and attempting to contact someone who could follow through his original intention. This proved fruitless.
We finally contacted John Nathan-Turner on Wednesday, 20th September at almost exactly the time the TWA flight took off from London, Heathrow. He subsequently told John that we would not be coming.
It is impossible for us to say how much we regret the whole incident and in particular in disappointing you, the fans, who have been so loyal to "Doctor Who". We leave you to draw your own conclusions but emphasise none of us has withdrawn from our original agreement.
THE ABOVE FAX HAS BEEN APPROVED BY ALL FOUR OF US.
Signed by JOHN NATHAN-TURNER on behalf of SYLVESTER McCOY, NICHOLAS COURTNEY and GARY DOWNIE

On the night before the convention it became known that JNT and Gary Downie would not be coming, but there were differing versions as to why, and also as to why Sylvester was not coming. Several of the fan guests of honour were in contact with JNT and displayed a faxed letter from him with his view of what had occurred. According to JNT, he and Gary Downie, Nicholas Cortney and Sylvester McCoy were all awaiting receipts of tickets and/or money from Pat Baumgardner up until September 20th (the convention took place over the weekend of September 22-24th). Registered letters were supposedly sent to them on September 5th but did not arrive and were not replaced, and so they were unable to come to the convention despite their desire to be there.

Since doubts have been raised about whether the letters were ever sent, Pat Baumgardner readily concedes now that he erred in not addressing this issue publically at the convention rather than remaining silent on the subject. He claims to have receipts for letters and proof that a cashier's cheque was obtained for John and Gary, and these items are in the possession of his attorney while the Post Office is being asked to trace his registered letter that was supposedly mailed to England. However, he maintains that John and Gary were the only people whose participation was dependent on receiving this letter from the USA. Courtney was not supposed to be coming any longer at this point and it was Baumgardner's understanding that the BBC would be providing Sylvester's transportation to the event. He says that JNT proposed bringing him for publicity during a telephone conversation and the convention was only committed to picking up the hotel expenses. He argues that it would have made little sense to keep Sylvester's participation a secret rather than publicising it as widely as possible if the event was incurring a sustantial expense.

One obvious question is why airline tickets were not just arranged and prepaid from the United States, as was done with Ainley. Baumgardner says that it was orginally planned to fly everyone on the same airline and reservations were made. However JNT and Downie wanted to travel on from Columbus as a vacation and wanted to incorporate the convention's share of the travel plan into their bookings with a different airline. At that point it became necessary to send a cheque that could be given to their travel agents in London.

There seems to be faint hope of sorting out exactly what occurred given that much of what happened took place in private telephone conversations. The latest is that it now transpires that Nicholas Cortney was **asked** not to attend the event, and the police have become involved following the bouncing of cheques to several people owed money for the event. Airey, Halderman, Bennett and Katz are blaming everyone else, conveniently forgetting who got Pat Baumgarnder access to people who set up the convention in the first place, and seem to be busy congratulating themselves for saving the day at the convention with their activities, which is a joke since their 'play' received more unfavourable comments than anything else that went on!

It is simply unfortunate that these events should have cast a shadow on what was otherwise a pretty encouraging barometer of interest in **Doctor Who** in America.

NEBULA 26

Reviewed by Peter Linford

IT IS NEVER WISE to make big claims about something's quality before it has occured.

Nebula 26 boasted in advance publicity of being 'The première **Doctor Who** event of 1989'. Considering the general high quality of conventions this year that is not a claim to be made lightly. Nebula 26 was, as the advertisement goes, 'good, but not **that** good'.

Part of the fault, at least, lay not with the organisers (the Merseyside Local Group) but with the venue. The Britannia Adelphi, Liverpool, is a very nice and very large hotel, and one got the impression that the staff regarded Nebula 26 and its attendees with contempt and some suspicion, requesting payment in advance of everything and preferably in cash (in stark contrast to The Wiltshire Hotel used for HoneyComb).

The event itself got off to a reassuringly late start, on the Saturday morning of October 14th, with the showing of **Battlefield** to introduce Nick Courtney, who told of the "Complete Con" in America, of which he, Nathan-Turner and one or two others are involved in litigation against the organiser (see Kathleen's review). From what Courtney implied, it seems that the organiser used their names to attract people to the event but had no intention that they should attend it because he did not wish to incur their expenses. Courtney was later joined by Destroyer creators Sue Moore and Stephen Mansfield who said lots of technical stuff that most people probably didn't understand.

This panel ended, and unleashed one of the most tiresome things that can ever happen at a convention...**nothing**! And it was not the only time. On almost every occasion that a session ended there was nobody there to say what was happening next. The audience just sat there in anticipation - and irritation. But on this occasion it was worth the wait, as MLG had managed to obtain a copy of **The Ice Warriors** (although they were not prepared to say from where and would like to stress that no copies were to be taken so please don't ring them up!), the four surviving episodes of which were shown at intervals over the weekend.

Twenty-three minutes, and another tedious gap later, came one of the most imaginative sessions at a convention for some time. Soundsmiths Mark Ayres and Dick Mills went through the procedures for soundtracking an episode of **Doctor Who**, explaining (in comprehensible terms) how the sounds and music are made to fit the images; showing an untreated segment of **Greatest Show**, playing through the music, then putting the two together. A worthwhile and fascinating exercise which was repeated with Dominic Glyn the following day.

Then came a Marvel tenth anniversary panel, with artists Alister Pearson, Lee Sullivan and John Ridgeway, replete with some unbelievably inane audience questions. No wonder John Freeman sounded exasperated! The highlight of the panel saw the unexpected arrival of Sophie Aldred bearing a homemade birthday cake at which point the audience rose hysterically and surged forward, flash bulbs ablaze (including one idiot who merrily snapped away blissfully unaware he had left his lens cap on!).

Sooner or later The Ultimate Adventure, like the obligatory Marvel panel and Richard Franklin, must surely outlive its usefulness on the convention circuit, but here it was again, with all the old chestnut questions that make anyone who has attended more than two conventions this year hurry out in search of the bar.

After a rather over-sentimental tribute to Ian Marter, to whom the convention was billed as a tribute, the only really controversial panellists took to the stage - Victor Pemberton and Peter Bryant, the latter of whom made very clear his contempt for the current state of **Doctor Who** (an interview with Peter will appear very soon in **DWB**). He regards his version as "Far superior to today", and Victor Pemberton, too, is not impressed (see interview this issue). Neither were the audience by the ensuing horribly long autograph queues. The evening, as is now usual at conventions, called upon the guests and less shameful attendees to make total fools of themselves in cabaret, including Sophie who did a wicked impersonation of her predecessor, Bonnie!

One of the highlights of day two was the **Ghost Light** panel which included Marc Platt, Michael Cochrane, Alan Wareing, Sharon Duce and Carl Forgione, but the oddest was (wait for it) the Emmerdale Farm panel (no kidding!), comprising Frazer Hines, the recently deceased Richard Franklin, and Sally Knyvette who, as usual, was not free with praise for that other show she used to be in. According to her, **Blake's 7** went wrong more or less from the start because of mis-management. She also revealed how her feminist tendencies were often browned off with her treatment as someone who was there to get caught and be saved by Blake ("One night I was tied to a tree in the New Forest until four in the morning!"). But what really made everyone sit up and take notice were the words "**Blake's 7** film". It seems that there are moves in the States to get a **Blake's 7** film off the ground. Sally - despite the fact that she had spent most of the panel slagging the show off - is interested, as apparently are Gareth Thomas and Paul Darrow, and Terry Nation is "sitting there waiting for the movie to be made" (his mind, no doubt, on the royalties!).

Nation was also a subject for discussion when Johnny Byrne and Terrance Dicks took the stage, the latter of whom - when discussing the difficulties in novelising the stage play - remarked: "Roger Hancock (Nation's agent) would bite your leg off as soon as look at you!"

This over, Gary Russell bravely chaired what he termed a "rolling panel", which interpreted simply means "Oh heck, we've run out of guests and it's only half past three", resulting in two or three guests coming back on for a couple of minutes, not saying anything new, and then rushing off to make way for the next group. After this, all the guests still present were wheeled on yet again to be applauded (how American!). It was not a memorable close to the proceedings.

Nebula 26 was not the best convention of 1989. What it really lacked was better on-the-day administration and co-operative hotel staff, but it takes a lot more than that to get regular convention-goers down and, on the whole, everyone who went enjoyed it.

PHOTOS: (this page) Anthony Ainley and Terry Nation, (Opposite page) Sophie Aldred and BATTLEFIELD Destroyer props

GHOST LIGHT
"MONKEY BUSINESS"

ATMOSPHERE would appear to be the key to truly great 'Doctor Who'. Most of the accepted 'classic' stories are imbued with an aura unique to that story.

Examples: the psuedo-Egyptology themes in **Pyramids of Mars;** the Faschist overtones present in **Genesis of the Daleks;** and the high-contrast battle between scientific reasoning and the superstitions generated through fear of black magic of **The Daemons.** Atmosphere is the end result of all of the elements of any story (direction, casting, the script, the sets, the music, the performances, the effects, etc, etc.), and it is only achieved when all of the elements work perfectly in harmony with each other. Like only its most eminent of predecessors, **Ghost Light** is a **Doctor Who** masterpiece. Not only was it Sylvester McCoy's best **Doctor Who** story to date, it is one of the finest stories for many years.

The story shares roots with a couple of other **DWB** top-ten **Doctor Who** classics; the Victorian setting of both **The Evil of the Daleks** and, perhaps more importantly, of Robert Holmes' fusion of the Victoriana of the Sherlock Holmes stories and the gothic melodrama of The Phantom Of The Opera, **The Talons of Weng-Chiang.** The Victorian era is a rich source of contradictions and inspirations. A corrupt society that both luxuriated in the lap of opulence and Empire, and also suffered from the decay typified by horrific squalor and suffering. Both are aspects previously explored by Sir Arthur Conan-Doyle in the Sherlock Holmes stories, and by Robert Holmes in **The Talons of Weng-Chiang. Ghost Light,** the **Doctor Who** story now joining **Talons** as the two most evocative portrayals of the paradoxes of Victorian society within the series, is soaked in the atmosphere of the period.

Following on from the patchy and ultimately dislikable **Battlefield,** the qualities that **Ghost Light** has brought to **Doctor Who** may yet allow the programme to emerge into the nineties with a shred of repectability.

Alan Wareing, one of the most talented directors introduced to **Doctor Who** during the eighties, proves that his directorial debut on the programme with **The Greatest Show in the Galaxy** (review:DWB#63) was no fluke. His qualities are apparent in many areas: in his assured command of positioning, framing and lighting; in exhibiting a good sense of pacing and editing; and in the ability to extract good performances from his cast. Even on the evidence of just two transmitted stories, these aptitudes are strong enough to place Wareing among the greats of **Doctor Who**'s chequered history, whose number already includes Douglas Camfield, David Maloney, Christopher Barry and Peter Grimwade. Fine company, indeed!

A good director is chiefly aided by a good script, and in Marc Platt's confident **Doctor Who** debut, Wareing is working from one of the best since the much-missed Christopher Bidmead handed in **Frontios** way back in 1984. A script as well-balanced as it was well-packed into three episodes (with no discernable padding) deserves much praise. After a couple of viewings it becomes apparent that there is hardly a word wasted, and that many key words and phrases have been picked to convey a very specific meaning (such as the Doctor's remark that Ace's change of clothes into those of a "Victorian gentleman" is a "metamorphosis"). Every action has a reason, every occurrence an explanation. Even the standard defuse-the-bomb/stop-the-countdown "Firestorm Program" sequence at the end made enough sense in context, and succeeded in rounding the story off nicely. Even if some things are not made clear at the time they occur, then they are explained, or can be explained, at a later stage. It is an essential element that many of the writers brought to the series since John Nathan-Turner began producing it would do well to learn how to use.

With such a good script, there is much to dwell upon. Although I must admit to being led a wee bit astray in my speculations after the first episode, the story does manage to define itself in a most logical and sensible fashion. The dialogue retains a believable air, yet sparkles with wit and unforced humour. Although picking out a few examples is a little unfair, the reactions of both the Reverend Matthews and Redvers Fenn-Cooper to Ace's lack of apparel, Ace's bitter "Don't you have things you hate" reprimanding of the Doctor, and Josiah's cruel

"Cream of Scotland Yard" joke are just a few highlights. With characterization worthy of Robert Holmes, the script is a fine example of what even a studio-only **Doctor Who** can rise to. As **Doctor Who** stories go, this one stands out like the Fang Rock lighthouse.

Every character, with the exceptions of only the maids (who have no dialogue) and Mrs.Grose, who only appears briefly anyway, is a fully-shaped and wholly believable person, albeit one who may be a couple of score-draws away from a pools win. Mrs.Pritchard is the first we see and, although a perfect rôle for the excellent Sylvia Syms, it is a little reminiscent of the Jane Laportaire character, Madame de la Rougierre, in the BBC's recent adaption of Le Fanu's book, Uncle Silus, **The Dark Angel** (ref:DWB#63). Apart from dragging Ace around the house by her pony-tail and chloroforming the Reverend Matthews, she is given regrettably little to do.

With other characters being introduced quickly, it is a credit that all of them take on such immediate familiarity, without being stock stereotypes. Redvers Fenn-Cooper is initially the most insane of the house's inhabitants, but ultimately is one of the sanest. He is excellently portrayed by Michael Cochrane, whom many will remember from his last appearance in the programme as Lord Charles Cranleigh in **Black Orchid.**

Less likely to be recognised is Carl Forgoine, who portrayed Land in **Planet of the Spiders,** here giving a memorable performance as the most surreal addition to the Gabriel Chase household, that of the Neanderthal butler Nimrod (incidentally, if you don't know what the name means, consult a dictionary!). Nimrod is one of the best creations ever to emerge from a BBC make-up room, and also benefits by being introduced with a fairly unusual directional trick: that of initially having his back to the camera, leading the viewers to assume him to be the usual stooping butler of Victorian melodrama. When he turns, the viewers are in for a surprise, far more than would have been the case with a more conventional shot.

The Reverend Ernest-Matthews, Dean of Morthouse College, Oxford, is an initially amusing visitor to the house. Safely armed with the benefit of hindsight, we are able to laugh at his Victorian scepticism of the theories of evolution, as presented by Darwin, and championed by Josiah Samuel Smith. His branding of the Doctor as a "worse scoundrel than Darwin", and his anger at Ace's displayed shapely shoulders (calling her a "shameless wanton") are both examples of the script's meticulous attention to character building. When Matthews is later regressed to the state of "Homo Victorianus Erectus" (a self-contained example of one of the dozens of hints to metamosphosis, adaption and change scattered throughout the first couple of episodes, picked up only by the attentive), we are reminded of Gwendoline's song belted out on the pianoforte in the previous episode ("The monkey's house is nearly full, but there's room enough for you!"). With Matthews' death, we realise that the game is more serious than perhaps we expected. An excellent performance and, in John Nettleton, an inspired piece of casting.

Josiah's ward, Gwendoline, is an interesting character. It is in her naturte to enjoy the little trips to Java that she and her mother have arranged. We can only assume that not all of her prey were preserved like Inspector McKenzie, and that she and her mother must have killed at least some of the unwelcome intruders that must have called, like the policeman, from time to time. She is arguably marginally insane this side of Josiah's hypnotism and the other, yet her petrification as she is "reunited" with her mother evokes our sympathy nevertheless.

Josiah Samuel Smith, a joke not lost on this regular Fitzroy Tavern-goer (Samuel Smith is the name of the pub's brewer!), is the strangest of characters. His initial appearance, with the macabre little dark glasses, and enough dust on his shoulders to qualify him for a free vacuum cleaner demonstration, is another piece of well-executed black humour. His lucifugous nature, and his obvious control over the house (especially its lights) and over the inhabitants (the maids in particular), are both well established. A most credit-worthy performance by Ian Hogg, previously best known to us as the eponymous policeman from Rockcliffe's Babies and its subsequent series. Josiah's meddling intention to assassinate Queen Victoria (the Crowned Sax-Coburg) is a fairly unnecessary sub-plot, and is only useful as an indication of the pettiness of his scheme to re-establish the Empire under his control, but still he is a most sinister and charming character, and a worthy addition to the ranks of classic one-story villains. Late in episode one, his assurance to the Doctor that he is "as human as you" carries weight only for the briefest moment, until we remember that the Doctor isn't human, either...

The three late additions to the story - Control, Inspector MacKenzie and Light him, or, more correctly it, self - are worthy of some examination, too. The sleeping-policeman MacKenzie is a great personality, one that could easily have flown seemingly effortlessly from the pen of Robert Holmes (there is no greater compliment). The idea of opening a drawer to reveal a Victorian policeman is another surreal touch, and much appreciated. MacKenzie's insatiable appetite, matched perhaps only by his great stupidity and blundering courage, are enormously endearing, aided of course by the acting talent of Frank Windsor, who's now probably seen the inside of more blue serge than the entire cast of The Bill put together! His description of the comatose Nimrod ("Nasty looking customer, must be a foreigner", "Neanderthal", explains the Doctor, "Gypsy blood - I can see it in 'im", MacKenzie replies) is another delight. Gradually accepting the concept of a Neanderthal butler, MacKenzie begins to play the game ("Tricky things, mammoth!"). Like his sleeping friend, Nimrod, he would have made a very engaging companion, so it is a real shame that he ended his life as a primordial sludge. Anyway, what ever would he have told them down at the station to explain his long absence?

Control is another punning name, in its more scientific sense, and she is a character that - in the last episode - encapsulates and epitomises what the rest of the story is gradually unravelling to reveal: the central theme of the story (**change,** for those of you still looking up 'control' in the Concise Oxford!). Her transformation from old hag (a little too much performance here from Sharon Duce) to respectable lady invited by Redvers to accompany him at one of the Queen's garden parties is a nice parallel to Ace's change from "shameless wanton" to acceptable (that is, "acceptable" in the 1980's sense of "acceptable"), Victorian young lady. In both cases we cannot fail to remember the resemblance to George Bernard Shaw's 1912 play Pygmalion, in which a young, common-as-they-come street flower seller, Eliza Doolittle, is brought up and educated in the ways of a Victorian lady, by Professor 'Enry 'Iggins. The similarity does not escape us, especially as the Doctor refers to Ace as "Eliza". Well, if you're going to steal an idea, you might as well do so brazenly!

On the subject of Marc Platt's pilferage, the Doctor asks: "Who was it said 'Earthmen never invite their ancestors round to dinner'?" The answer is that it was Douglas Adams from his wildly popular radio series **The Hitch-Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy.** The line comes from the Narrator's "Earthmen are not proud of their ancestors, and never invite them round to dinner", just before Arthur meets Ford in front of the bulldozer that's trying to knock down his house. Homage ? Small universe!

Light is a difficult nut to crack. The strange androgynous performance delivered by John Hallam (remember him as Dirty Den's cell-mate, Barnsey, in EastEnders ?) might invite criticism of his performance, but I'm certainly more inclined to give him the benefit of the doubt. After all, Light is not a person, a being: it is an energy. It is metamorphic, the glow perhaps indicating seepages of the energy escaping from the unfamiliar and unwieldy form that it now inhabits. To Nimrod, it is something to be worshipped. ("He's gone to see a man about a God", quips the Doctor). As Light incarnate, we can easily read Hallam's performance in a more favourable way. It's a shame that the nuances may be lost on some viewers. As a practically omnipotent character, it's difficult to imagine the Doctor being able to outwit him, but as is pointed out later, thought moves faster than the speed of Light. The Doctor tricks him, and Light fades from an effervescent golden glow to a pale silvery grey, before dispersing completely. It's worth remembering, though, that energy cannot be destroyed, it can only change from one form of energy to another. Even after defeat, the Doctor's argument has a sound ring of truth.

In the end, the character who is most central to the entire mystery, is Ace. It has been a long time since a companion has had so much, of their background filled in with so much credibility. Of course, Marc Platt is not the first writer to explore Ace's background in detail (that honour must go to the progenitive Ian Briggs), but it is Platt that has taken our understanding of Ace to a new level. Briggs should be delighted. Sophie Aldred gives a fine performance in **Ghost Light,** a script which calls for the normally stoic Ace to face her own personal demons, even though it scares the bejeezus out of her in the process. Her fear as she discovers that the little "initiative test" that the Doctor has arranged for her is taking place in Gabriel Chase, Perivale, is a chilling moment. The story about her friend's house being fire-bombed, causing her to burn down the empty house in a hate-filled rage is a revelation more interesting and certainly more thought-provoking (if initially more difficult to comprehend) than the recent 'revelations' that we have had about the Doctor in **Silver Nemesis** and **Battlefield.** Ace is scared, defensive: "You're not my probation officer...You don't have to know **everything!**" is her bitter rebuff to the Doctor, which momentarily distances their increasingly cosy Doctor/Jo relationship. Ace, the arsonist! Hardly rôle model material for wannabees!

Sylvester McCoy gives a good performance, only occasionally allowed to slip into the mugging and over-emphasis that has prevented him from being completely acceptable. When he is not raising his voice too much, McCoy is a very capable Doctor.

Set all these characters loose in a house where the servants are afraid to stay after dark, and where at six o'clock precisely (or even at what passes for six!) a new set of maids emerge from behind sliding doors, and you have the perfect setting for a play in three acts. The wooden-panelled doors, the plush lift and the Victorian ephemera which give much authenticity to the house are an inspirational piece of design from Nick Somerville, and a tribute to the skills of the story's prop-buyer. The curtained-off spaceship and beautiful stained-glass windows are extra touches of excellence.

Special effects deserve a mention, too. From the exterior shots of the house, to the Hellraiser-like sequence when Redvers is straight-jacketed next to the opening light-box in the first episode, the special effects are never less than terrific. The petrification of Mrs.Pritchard and her daughter Gwendoline, and Josiah being repelled at the lift doors at the end of episode two, are examples of the rapidly improving art of video effects, which seemed to arrive at **Doctor Who** with the jaw-dropping extermination of the soldier at Totter's Yard in last year's **Remembrance of the Daleks.** It's a shame that it has taken the BBC thrity-five years to achieve an effect that Byron Haskin perfected so memorably in the 1953 film **War of the Worlds,** but there you go!

Sound effects were, as is always the case with the ever-reliable Dick Mills, of a more than acceptable standard, and managed to merge in well with the excellent (but seemingly ever-present) incidental music of Mark Ayres. Some of Mark's music was especially good, notably when certain pieces contrasted with the normal thematic flow of the music, for example, when backing Redvers' tale of being taken by Pygmies to see giant lizards (which, incidentally, although they were scoffed at by 'Young Conan-Doyle', were evidently later turned into a classic of Victorian literature by Conan-Doyle himself in his Professor Challenger book, The Lost World!).

The story finishes as it had run, at break-neck speed. Before you've had time to catch your breath, and despite the Doctor and Ace's little chat at the end, it's all over, and all over too soon. Stop. Rewind, and watch it again. It is a story which cannot be assimilated in one viewing (which will not help to endear it to the great unwashed). It is a story that demands to be watched a second and third time. It's only by repeated viewing that the clever intricacies of the story truly emerge. If you didn't understand the story the first time, watch again, and marvel at the carefully worded dialogue. Gasp at the quality of casting and the acting. Boo and hiss at the "aura of intense evil" personified by Josiah. Laugh and cheer as the hungry policeman exchanges witticisms with the Neanderthal butler. Above all, make the most of it. A story like **Ghost Light** is as delightful as a perfectly cooked steak, only ten times as rare!

JULIAN KNOTT

PHOTOS: (This page) John Hallam as Light, (back cover) Sophie Aldred as Ace (COPYRIGHT (c) BBC)

YOUR VIEW

MARTIN STEWART: **Ghost Light** can be summed up in one word; "Brilliant"! From beginning to end, it exuded an atmosphere of menace and tension which, combined with the excellent production values, made the whole story a joy to watch. The acting was almost faultless all round (although extra credit must be given to Ian Hogg for his chilling portrayal of Josiah Samuel Smith), and the sets were wonderfully detailed (especially the main hall). Mark Ayres is much better-suited to the programme than Keff McCulloch - witness the 'African Bongo' theme given to Redvers and the 'Victorian Nursery' score. Also ideally suited was the direction of Alan Wareing - the opening scene with the Doctor and Ace in the attic room had some beautifully set up shots, and the sequence in episode three where Ace lets her imagination run away with her was very imaginatively conceived. Also to be praised is Marc Platt, whose plot was always simple enough to follow but complex enough to have some fascinating twists and turns. If there is any criticism to be made it is that not everything was explained by the end, but with scenes as macabre as those where Rev.Ernest Matthews was "sent to Java" there can be little complaint. The story had a unique, nightmarish quality and has put the season back on the rails after a very shaky start.

JONATHAN HAYWARD: If nothing else, **Ghost Light** proved that Alan Wareing's direction of **Greatest Show** was not just a happy accident. This story was thoroughly compelling from the very start; mysterious, suspenseful, and not to mention downright weird without falling into the ubiquitous Cartmelian "Odd-ball" trap. Again Wareing picked a superb cast and brought out the best in them, with the exception of John Hallam as Light who was not nearly omnipotent enough after the two-episode build up his character had been given. Ian Hogg, Sylvia Syms and Katherine Schlesinger brought real life to their characters, but any acting honours must surely go to McCoy and Sophie Aldred who, without a doubt, gave their best performances to date. McCoy carries so much more conviction without that hat, it should be dispensed with on a more permanent basis! Having not had time to watch the story a second time, what exactly **were** Josiah and Control? And what was the link between them and Light? As is common with two and three-part stories, explanations do seem to play second fiddle to the action. Finally a word of praise for Mark Ayres' music; unlike Keff McCulloch's bland score for **Battlefield**, **Ghost Light**'s music fitted perfectly and acted to enhance the story, not drown it.

PAUL DUMONT: **Ghost Light** is everything **Doctor Who** can and should be - intelligent, well-acted and beautifully lit. The literary and Whovian references, especially the reversal of Conrad's "Heart of Darkness", were delightful; but best of all it has something completely missing from **Battlefield** - a **sustained** atmosphere of claustrophobia, terror and mystery. Is this Sylvester's **Talons of Weng Chiang** ?

DANIEL O'MAHONY: I actually enjoyed **Ghost Light** more than any other story of the past three years. At last, a story which doesn't feature soldiers and aliens shooting at each other but featuring realistic, interesting characters with a complex (though by no means confusing) plot which actually gets explained (albeit in throwaway lines, so what?!). In other words a story which raises itself above the dross we've been served from **The Twin Dilemma** onwards. My major gripe (aside from the rather unconvincing previous evolutionary stages of Josiah Samuel Smith, one of which bore a striking resemblance to Omega Mk II) concerns Control who was a little hard to understand in the first two episodes, at least on first viewing. And at last, there is blood once more in **Doctor Who** (on the end of the severed arm of the maid in episode three for those who missed it!) and sophisticated wit - the Crowned Sax-Coburgh and the mention of Douglas Adams. **Curse of Fenric** and **Survival** will have to be pretty damn good to get their votes from me come this year's season surveys.

CLINTON R. LAKIN: I can just imagine the frenzy **Ghost Light** will have put some fans into because of its general lack of coherency and that it broke the Cardinal Rule of traditionalists by leaving unanswered questions - but so what ? I never thought **The Greatest Show in the Galaxy** was particularly inexplicable and just assumed, as I did here, that the Doctor's wisdom is more than a match for any would-be antagonists, and that if he needs to resort to dubious, or even supernatural lengths to defeat them, then why shouldn't he. After all, he is **The Doctor!** Many people seem to need explanations laboured relentlessly before they will accept them - the fact that **Ghost Light** refused to meet these demands, in my opinion, renders it all the more effective. After all, no explanation is better than a tacky one, and in any case, it was stimulating enough in itself to allow us to formulate our own. The juxtaposition of intrigue, with gothic horror and psychological fears, worked tremendously, making it the strongest and arguably the best story this decade - a fine example of the sort of scripts that could lead **Doctor Who** successfully into the 1990's. Everything **must** change, and the Josiah Samuel Smiths of this world will just have to come to terms with it!

PAUL MASON: I sat down to episode one of **Ghost Light** with, thankfully, little previous knowledge of what to expect. The first episode genuinely set my pulse racing from the first scene. The second episode was not the disappointment that I expected after previous bitter experiences, but left me wary of what to expect in episode three (unexplained plot development, etc.). But my fears were unfounded as what we got was a fast, well-developed episode that left you on a high. The acting was top notch, especially the excellent Ian Hogg and John Hallam, and the script and direction were of a similar stature. Many stories seem to carry themselves on just a few scenes (ie: **Battlefield**), but **Ghost Light** was a gem from beginning to end.

MAXWELL ROWAN: **Battlefield** was good, but **Ghost Light** was exceptional. Alan Wareing directed the proceedings to perfection with an immaculate cast, and Marc Platt's unusual and macabre script was wonderfully mystifying until the simple explanations in episode three revealed all. **Doctor Who** has always excelled in period settings, and this story is worthy of joining all the other classic period **Who** stories. Who cares if Light looked like Gary Glitter and sounded like Michael Jackson. **Ghost Light** was an accomplished piece of masterful **Who.**

STEPHEN MAGINN: Once again **Ghost Light** was trying to fit far too much material into far too short a time. The result - confusion. The final part was too rushed and too devoid of explanations. However, I have a sneaky feeling that this is just as Marc Platt intended. Director Alan Wareing said at Nebula 26 in Liverpool that he still didn't understand the script, and at this remark Platt didn't bat an eyelid. **Ghost Light** could almost have been a **Sapphire & Steel** story, somewhat ironic in that minutes before the final episode, Joanna Lumley interviewed David McCullum on Wogan! Sylvester and Sophie came out of it best of all - the Seventh Doctor is now the darkest and most manipulative since Hartnell, who sabotaged the TARDIS in **The Daleks**, and Ace is receiving the best companion material since Ian, Barbara and Susan.

EDWARD JOLLEY: **Ghost Light** was initially far superior to **Battlefield.** The first episode had a superb atmosphere, and was undoubtedly the best since **Caves of Androzani.** Unfortunately it soon began to suffer from inadequate explanations in much the same way as **Greatest Show.** Casual readers and hardcore fans alike must have been confused by everything that was left unexplained. Still, at least it was treated seriously.

CHRISTOPHER WOOD: I've just seen **Ghost Light** episode one...and what a mess it was! Half the time I couldn't understand what some of the characters were saying, not least McCoy with his hyper-fast speech and the aliens in the basement (give me monotone Cyberspeech any day, Mr.Nathan-Turner). Does anyone know what it was about? Why do the Doctor and Ace get accepted into the house so easily? Why didn't Ernest Matthews seem surprised to see a caveman as the butler? Why does Mr.Cartmel find it necessary to give the Doctor a reason for landing the TARDIS, when the time he takes to explain could be better spent on the story itself? No doubt Cartmel fans will say "Watch the rest of it..." I will. The only problem is, Joe Public **won't**, and that will mean more viewing figures down the drain. Ah well, I'm off to watch **The Talons of Weng-Chiang** on video...some **real** Victorian value!

* STAR * RATINGS	*
SCRIPT	★★★½
ORIGINALITY	★★★½
DIRECTION	★★★★★
ACTING	★★★★★
SETS	★★★★★
COSTUMES	★★★★½
MONSTERS	★★★★½
SPECIAL EFFECTS	★★★★★
MUSIC	★★★★½
OVERALL STORY	★★★★½
TOTAL = 90%	

preview

TRANSLATING **the overblown 'Kaligari'-like sets of the Kandy Kitchen, the constant irritation of the calming musak and the edgy performance of Sheila Hancock to the printed page is the kind of challange that only a script's original author can tackle with any reul success.**

To give life, background and a kind of strange believability to characters that have no real existence (however much you have the comparison of Mrs.Thatcher to Helen A fed to you by the more politically-minded fan writers), is a difficult task that is rarely achieved within the restricted format imposed on the **Doctor Who** novel by W.H.Allen.

Conversely, when a **Doctor Who** script is as 'off-beat' as one Graeme Curry had delivered, there are bound to be elements, scenes and explanations that even the best-intentioned director (and Chris Clough is certainly that) cannot help not being able to include in the version eventually televised.

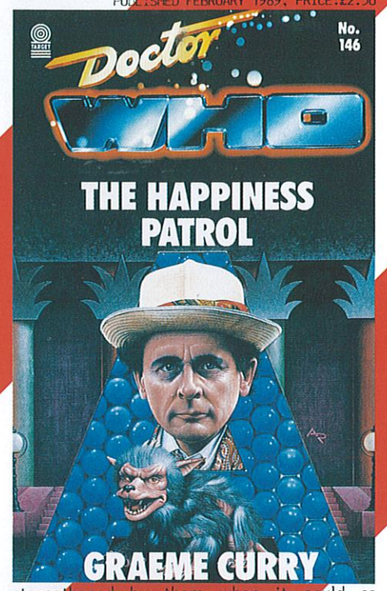
Somewhere, like a bizarre expansion of the Chinese Whisper Syndrome, the joke loses something in translation. An opportunity is always presented, then, for the writer to expand on the televised version when the time comes to adapt the work into a novel. Some writers, it has to be said, are far more adept at this than others. Happily, with only a three-episode script to adapt in the same page count as some writers have to impart four or even six episodes of material, Curry is lucky enough to be able to escape the confines of both unsympathetic direction, and the sometimes stifling demands of the publisher; leaving only the pure, undiluted kitsch of the original story.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Curry is able to use the extra space in the 140 page manuscript to flesh out the characters that inhabit Terra Alpha, and is even given to motivating them in ways that we mortals can understand, and even identify with. Like some of the book's more memorable predecessors, most notably the novels of Brian Hayles and, more recently, David Fisher, the author has invested in the characters a history, a life outside the seventy-five minute window granted us as non-participatory viewers. We are given a little bit of background information on just about everyone that we encounter, even down to the attendent on the door of the Forum, whom the Doctor interrogates at the end of episode two.

This extra information can, in the hands of a less-skilled exponent, be quite superfluous, but more usually it enables us to understand the story much better. When the information imparted to us is absolutely essential to explaining something in the story, and it was not included in the TV version, the book takes on a "must be read" status, if only to uncover the gross shortcomings of the source version. The story of the Kandy Man's arrival on the planet, in Gilbert M's suitcase, is briefly mentioned in the TV version, just before he and Joseph C escape in Helen A's shuttle. It makes no real sense, though, and the version in the book - not directly revealed in the dialogue, but merely as an anecdotal aside to the reader - expands on the story, and explains much.

Of course, given a book which works this hard at making the definitive version of the author's story, there are hundreds of examples of this expansion and, thankfully, the tone of the book is



strengthened by them when it could so easily have slipped into a mire of confusing and contradictory factual porridge.

The author gives an extra dimension to the Pipe People (more properly the Alpidac), Fifi, and especially to the way that Helen A is running the planet's economy. We are told that the planet had been colonised for its ability to grow sugar beet, to satisfy man's seemingly eternal demand for the refined product. This farming, and the construction of the hundreds of processing factories, drove the native life form, the Alpidac, into hiding. The factories were staffed by captured dissidents, the drones, which, although their instincts are heavily and harshly suppressed, only succeed in amplifying the desire to rebel.

SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT

As the dialogue has been lifted almost intact from the televised script, excepting the numerous beginnings and ends of scenes which seem to have been clipped from the TV version to cut down the story's running time (some of them were definitely shot), the book deviates little from the version we saw. No notable added scenes that would have indicated padding. No extra characters. All the excellence of the book comes from the desire to inform, the want to set the record straight.

The book seems to be slightly lacking in description. Whereas some characters, and creatures, are adequately presented, there are one or two obvious omissions. The Kandy Man, for example, is probably not intended as the same one that we all cringed at on TV. He is still of a confectionary apparel draped over a robotic skeleton, but is probably intended to be largely human in appearance. There is description of his blackened teeth (a warning to all the children out there in reader land, no doubt!!), and Ace's description of him as "Pimplehead" stands, but one gets the feeling that this is the graphic description of the result of having such a sweet-toothed constitution, rather than the familiar blue-headed Bertie that we all know and despise with every sinew of our being. There is also description of the Kandy Man being made up of "Caramel, sherbet, toffee, marzipan, gelling agents", but I feel it is again at odds, in context, with the image presented on TV. There is a brief mention of the Kandy Man wearing a lab-coat, too!

Nicely to the fore throughout, and serving as the book's theme, is the paradox spelled out by the Doctor at the end - that without sadness, there can be no happiness. The human equation cannot be completed without all the factors. The contrast between the two is essential, and it is especially clarified with the tragic image of the defeated Helen A, sobbing over her dead pet Stigorax, Fifi.

A BOOK OF MERIT

Graeme Curry is to be congratulated on turning in a more than acceptable addition to the **Doctor Who** range, then. It does have faults, but they are deeply inherent in the idea of the story, and are only the annoying symptons of such an odd-ball tale. Is it possible for a writer to turn in a worthy book of merit both as a record of the story, and as a stand-alone piece of **Doctor Who** fiction ? Graeme Curry once again achieves it, and that does make me happy...

JULIAN KNOTT

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